This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

**Usage guidelines**

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

**About Google Book Search**

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

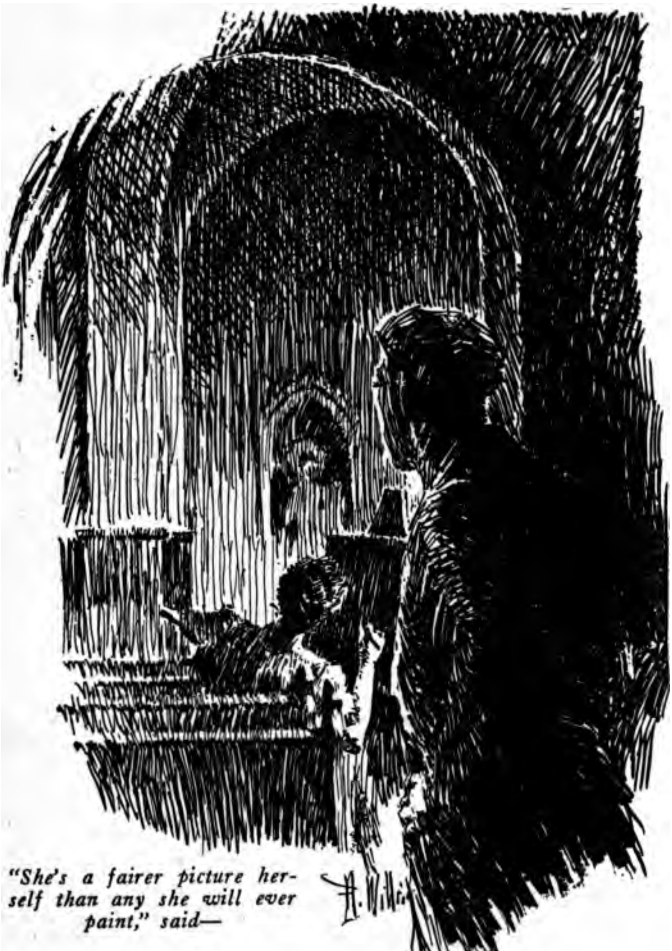
NYPL RESEARCH LIBRARIES
3 3433 07485481 5

# TALES · OF · CALIFORNIA YESTERDAYS

ROSE L. ELLERBE

THE NEW Y
PUBLIC LI

ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN



*"She's a fairer picture herself than any she will ever paint," said—*

*In the Shadow of the Mission (page 42)*

# TALES OF CALIFORNIA YESTERDAYS

*By*

## *ROSE L. ELLERBE*

---

**Cover Design and Illustrations by Howard Willard**
**Typography by Taylor's Printery**

---

---

Warren T. Potter
Publisher and Bookmaker
Los Angeles, California

THE NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY
82440A
ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS
R 1923 L

Copyright, 1916, by
WARREN T. POTTER
All Rights Reserved

## CONTENTS

Page
Three Cooks of San Gabriel . . . . . . . . 9
The Faith of His Mother . . . . . . . . . 18
Padre Salvador's Miracle . . . . . . . . 28
In the Shadow of the Mission . . . . . . 42
A Tooth—and a Tooth . . . . . . . . . 52
The Bluff of Don José Morales . . . . . . 64
The Word of a Californian . . . . . . . . 74
Siege of La Cajetin . . . . . . . . . . . 87
For Lack of a Peachblow Silk . . . . . . 99
"The Hawk and the Chickens" . . . . . . 108
The Fate of His Race . . . . . . . . . . 116
Simple Tony . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 125
Ambitious Marta . . . . . . . . . . . 134
Faith Triumphant . . . . . . . . . . . 147
The Candle of Good San Antonio . . . . 160
The Boss of the Ranch . . . . . . . . . 172
The Departure of José Juan . . . . . . . 187
The Grave of Señora Valdez . . . . . . . 196

Permission to reprint these little tales has been courteously granted by the Illustrated Weekly Magazine of the Los Angeles Times, Argonaut, Sunset, Out West, Youth's Companion, and other periodicals. Credit is also given to the Sunset Magazine for the drawings in the stories of The Bluff of Don José Morales and "The Hawk and the Chickens."

[illegible] 12 Feb. 1923

# Three Cooks of San Gabriel

THE long, low dining-room of San Gabriel Mission, with its deep-set windows and earthen floor, was comfortingly cool and dark, contrasted with the white glare of the noonday sun outside and the quivering heat that blanketed the plains and danced between them and the mountain heights. Padre Zalvidea, at the end of the long table, pushed away his filled plate and leaned against the rawhide back of his great chair.

"We must decide upon a cook," he said, with emphasis; "Andrés is still too much of a savage to prepare civilized food."

"Yes," Padre Sanchez answered his superior meekly, "he is still an Indian, but——" and a worried expression crept over his placid face.

"You see," the dignified Father Superior turned to his guests—Señor Villavencia, a little old man, wearing the order of the king upon his breast, and a gaily caparisoned officer fresh from Mexico. "You see, there are but three women at this establishment and—they are all cooks!"

A chorus of laughter rose about the table.

"It is no laughing matter," Father Sanchez spoke almost testily, "when there are but three women in a community and two of them are disgruntled——"

"It overworks the confessional, eh?" and the old soldier chuckled. "But is there no choice? Are they equally good cooks—these three fair ones?"

"They are all good cooks, no doubt," Padre Sanchez admitted, "and yet——" the good father heaved a sigh.

"It is a delicate matter, then, the choice. But—why not a trial? Let each one serve a dinner, and we, your guests, will pass judgment." Señor Villavencia patted his fat hands in glee over his own brilliant suggestion.

"That might help us in our difficulty, brother," and Padre Zalvidea turned hopefully to his confrere.

"It might," the younger priest admitted; but his tone was doubtful.

"Something must be done. We cannot put up with this bungler longer. At least, the question will be settled," urged Father Zalvidea.

"Yes—very well." But it was plain that Father Sanchez, to whom was left the management of domestic affairs, was skeptical.

"I intended to go on to Monterey tomorrow," the young officer spoke. "But—I know something of what a dinner should be, perhaps; and a day or two more or less will not matter. The dispatches will keep—if you will accept me as one of the judges." A faint trace of condescension was in his manner. What did these musty Franciscan friars and this old sergeant of the frontier know of dinners?

"Thanks." Padre Zalvidea may have concealed a shade of sarcasm in his grave politeness. "And we will send to *el Pueblo de Los Angeles* for Alcalde Ramirez. He is the best judge of a meal in the department of the Californias," he continued, and the rest joined in his laughter—for Alcalde Ramirez weighed three hundred pounds and was known from Monterey to San Diego for his table feats.

An Indian servant was dispatched for the three women. A few moments later, old Margarita, her face deeply tooled and blurred by time, but her eyes still flashing with unconquered fire, entered the room and, after saluting the fathers with reverence, took her seat on the wooden bench near the door. Then came Carmen, a plump young matron with a *rebosa* tossed lightly over her heavy crown of black hair. She was soon followed by Eulalia Perez, tall, still of face and light of step.

Padre Sanchez explained the proposed trial, while the women listened with keenest interest and the two guests studied the candidates critically. When it was made entirely plain what was desired, old Margarita broke into contemptuous laughter.

"I—who have cooked for the Viceroy of Mexico, himself—I have nothing to fear from these," she shrilled.

"My mother taught me all she knew," Carmen broke out, with an angry glare at her rivals, "and the Holy Fathers know well what a cook she was!"

"Yes, yes," Father Sanchez interposed soothingly. "Candelria served us well—God rest her soul! And you, Eulalia?" and he turned to the one who, with downcast face, had remained silent.

"I will do as well as I may, *padre,*" she returned, deferentially.

Straws were brought; the young officer prepared and held them. The first lot fell to old Margarita, the second to Carmen. The women withdrew in a silence that broke into a patter of exclamations and excited laughter as they passed out the door.

The next day an air of expectation pervaded the whole great establishment of San Gabriel. More than the usual quota of Indian servants hung about the kitchen door. The entire mission guard—of four soldiers—loitered in the *patio*. In one of the long corridors sat Señor Villavencia and the young officer, occasionally sniffing odors from the kitchen while they laid wagers on the coming viands and the result of the contest. Even the priests finished their devotions and came from the sacristy with their latest guest, Alcalde Ramirez, at ten minutes before the noon hour.

When the men were all seated at the table, old Margarita, her face flushed and her *rebosa* cast aside entirely, entered with a great platter upon which rested—brown, shiny, juicy, decorated with sprigs of green coriander—a suckling pig.

"A dish for a king's table!" the old soldier cried enthusiastically. Indian boys and girls followed her in rapid succession, bringing steaming dishes of *tamales, frijoles, enchiladas, buñuelos,* pungent relishes and dainty dulces.

It was truly a regal feast, and when the dishes were removed and the diners were left to their wine and tobacco, they all agreed that it must be a toothsome meal, indeed, that should go beyond old Margarita's repast. Alcalde Ramirez, especially, was for calling the question of the cook settled, although he was quite willing to serve as a judge for any number of meals. Only Padre Sanchez looked grave.

The good fathers of San Gabriel were no longer young and were wonted to simple fare. That night Padre Zalvidea had dreams—bad dreams—and pains. The next morning he said to his companion, who was also looking a little worn:

"A few such dinners as Margarita gave us yesterday would put me under the presbytery there!"

"Yes," the fleshly environment of Padre Sanchez quivered with laughter, "and they would make me as fat as her pig—or Alcalde Ramirez. I hope—the saints forgive me—but I hope Señor Villavencia also slept badly."

When Carmen heard the squeal of the sacrificed porker, she set her wits to work, and then, with an inspiration, she ordered her husband to bring her a fat young buck. Deer were plentiful in the foothills when San Gabriel was young and before nightfall Ramon was back with his kill. The next morning a great bed of coals was prepared and the haunches were set to roast upon a spit, with an Indian boy to watch and twirl them. The day was hot and the adobe kitchen became an oven. Carmen, as she mixed and ground and pounded and tasted, panted with the heat and the haste and the excitement of it all.

At last she went to the door to wipe her face and catch a breath of fresh air. It chanced that Bernal Diaz, the handsomest and youngest soldier of the *pueblo* guard, was crossing the *patio* at the moment—he had come as the attendant of the *alcalde*. He paused when he saw Carmen, not so long ago the prettiest *señorita* of the country. As they chatted, old Domingo, sitting in a shady corner, began to thrum his guitar. With a challenging glance Bernal tossed his *sombréro* upon Carmen's head. Laughingly she sprang to the hard earth and caught the step and the tune. Together the two swayed and swung and chanted the words their grandsires had sung, wholly forgetful of time and care.

Suddenly a whiff of burning flesh percolated through the line of watchers. With a shrill scream

Carmen came to herself and bounded into the kitchen. The tempest that followed made Bernal Diaz hastily retreat, thanking God the while that Ramon Abila — and not he — had won the fair Carmen.

The venison, the burnt crust carefully removed, was served in a savory smother. Only such a connoisseur as Señor Villavencia could have detected the accident. But he, with a morsel upon a fork, pronounced critically, "A little overdone; in fact, a trace of scorch — if I mistake not." Yet the other judges were decidedly of the opinion that Carmen's dinner was very good eating and would be hard to excel.

The padres exchanged glances of dismay. If Carmen were to be the chosen cook complications would surely result. The sergeant caught the meaning glance and his little eyes twinkled. "I see," he said to himself as he went to his siesta, "a little diplomacy is required here."

An hour or two later, while the rest still slumbered over the trial dinner, the guest left his room, crossed the *patio* and followed along the *zanja* until he came to a clump of willows under which Eulalia Perez was kneeling. She dropped her linen upon the white stone in the water, when the distinguished visitor of the Mission addressed her. Very earnestly he talked with her and finally drew from his pocket a little time-stained book. It had been his wife's most cherished heritage — the recipes of her grandmother. He read from its pages, explaining as he went on, and then he took from his pocket a little package, handling it reverently, as becomes a sacred thing. This, with many directions and warnings, he left in her hands.

It was the custom of Padre Zalvidea to devote an hour after evening vespers to a leisurely inspection of the establishment. Then it was a common thing to find the good father peering into a dark doorway, or listening to the talk about a smoldering fire, where a joint was roasting or tortillas were smoking. Sometimes he came with a stern reproof or a sharp command; but more often it was a genial word or a jovial laugh that marked his passing. That he should pause that night and speak with Eulalia Perez, who was sitting outside her door, was a matter of no comment; nor did anyone notice the small bottle of Andalusian wine that he left in her hands.

The next day, the last of the trial, the interest was intensified. The whole mission environs was athrill. Juan Perez, the mayor-domo, impatiently declared that another day of the cooking contest would ruin the harvest, for the laborers were continually speculating and sniffing the air. The news had spread to Los Angeles and that morning Don José Carrillo and Don Joaquin Sepulveda galloped up and asked permission to share the feast. They were heartily welcomed; but the young Mexican reminded them that they were not qualified to vote in the final decision.

Eulalia had peremptorily declined all assistance but that of Andrés and kept the kitchen door shut tight all the morning. When at last she and Andrés appeared to bear the steaming dishes across the *patio* to the dining room, there was scarcely footway for their passage.

A soup, rich and tasty and fragrant with garlic and other odorous ingredients was served first. Padre Sanchez smacked his lips with gusto as he tasted it. "*Ajo blanco,*" he cried, "ah! it carries me back to Andalusia herself!"

Señor Villavencia, closing his eyes, pronounced, "It is a dream!"

The soup plates were carried away and other dishes were brought. A plate of *albondigas* made Alcalde Ramirez lean forward with gleaming eyes, while the Mexican officer exclaimed in surprise when a dish of little pastries was set near him. The place of honor before the Father Superior was left vacant to the last.

When Eulalia entered with a great bowl, carefully covered, the old officer and the young man alike forgot their manners and stood up to peer across the table, as the cover was lifted. Even the good padre himself half rose in his chair as the delicious fragrance reached his nostrils. Plunging the ladle into its luscious depths, he cried:

*"Guajolote en mole verdé* (turkey in green sauce) as my grandmother used to prepare it in Spain!"

When the third dinner was finished and the dishes taken away, Father Sanchez, not without a moment's hesitation, asked:

"Well, who has given us the best dinner?"

He looked first to Señor Villavencia.

"There can be no question as to that," exclaimed the old man. Rising to his feet and lifting his glass, he announced, with a dramatic gesture:

"Only at the King's own table, have I eaten a better dinner than this of your Eulalia!"

"Never having dined at a King's table," spoke Alcalde Ramirez, "this is the best meal I have yet eaten."

The Mexican officer agreed with this decision, adding generously, "And it not only redounds to the honor of the cooks, but also to the resources of Mission San Gabriel, that three such dinners can be served here, in the wilds, as it were."

At a nod from Padre Sanchez, Eulalia Perez and the other two contestants were summoned. Gravely, Padre Zalvidea announced the verdict of the three judges. And Padre Sanchez, as he took a heavy iron key from the thong about his waist and handed it to Eulalia, declared:

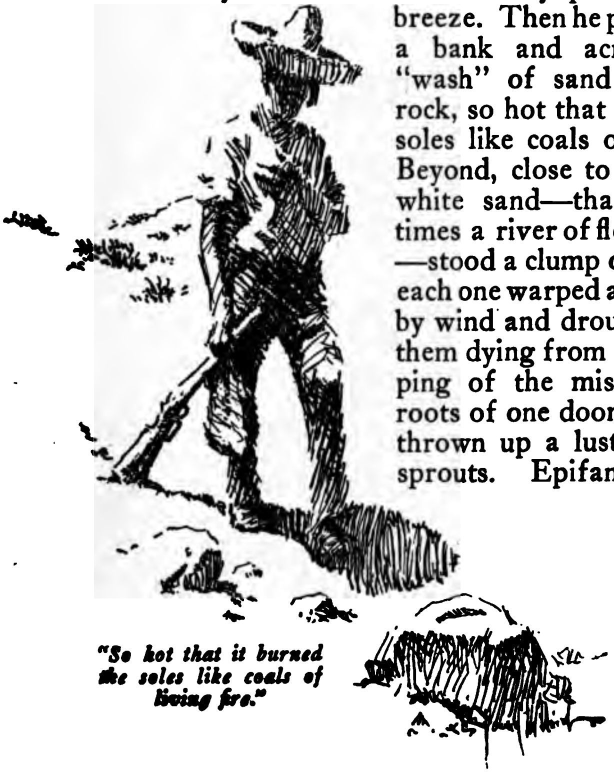
"Only the table of the King is better served than ours has been to-day, Eulalia; therefore you are from now on the cook of San Gabriel."

And his ruddy, round face wore a smile of contentment.

Eulalia Perez was for many years the cook, housekeeper and matron of San Gabriel Mission. In her reminiscences, dictated for Hubert Bancroft and included, in manuscript, in the Bancroft collection of the University of California library, she tells of the three women cooks and the trial dinners.

# The Faith of His Mother

THE crisp, sun-baked greasewood stalks crackled and snapped like a cheerful wood blaze, although the footsteps of Epifanio were not heavy. Hardened as he was to the burning noonday heats and the nightly chills of the desert side of the mountains, the boy panted in the parching air, and lifted his heavy sombrero to catch any possible stirring breeze. Then he plunged down a bank and across a wide "wash" of sand and broken rock, so hot that it burned the soles like coals of living fire. Beyond, close to the river of white sand—that was sometimes a river of fleeting waters—stood a clump of sycamores, each one warped and deformed by wind and drought, some of them dying from the fatal sapping of the mistletoe. The roots of one doomed giant had thrown up a lusty growth of sprouts. Epifanio crept beneath the shelter of their broad, heat-wilted leaves, laid down his gun



*"So hot that it burned the soles like coals of living fire."*

and empty game-bag and, with a sense of returning comfort, let his eyelids fall.

The sun had almost slipped behind the mountains when the sleeper was aroused by the crunching of footsteps. He turned upon his stomach and peered out cautiously. A man had left the trail and was seeking the shade of the sycamores. Epifanio recognized the type at once—a desert miner trailing to the outside. Another glance at the shuffling, uncertain stepping, and the vacancy in the desert-blackened and sharpened face, revealed why the stranger was here, many miles from the main road through the pass.

The man stumbled to a seat in the first patch of shade, brushed off his flopping hat with an impatient gesture, and took a long, eager gulp from the flask in his hand. Presently he raised himself upon his knees and began to look about him with an air of secrecy that made Epifanio hold his breath. Evidently his neighbor was in a suspicious mood, and the revolver in its holster behind the flat hip was conspicuous. It was well that the searching eyes wavered and blinked foolishly. Satisfied, the man sat down again, drew a chamois money bag from his breast and poured a little stream of coin into a bandanna in his lap. Epifanio could not see it, but as the owner mumbled to himself and fumbled it back into the bag, he caught the gleam of gold. The dazed brain lost count, the enticing clink of coin again followed an angry shake of the bag, and again, with many pauses and curses, the money was replaced. At last the capitalist was reassured. He dropped the bag back into its safety-deposit, took another drink, adjusted his hat for a pillow and lay down.

Soon the rasping breath of drunken sleep defiled the solemn desert stillness.

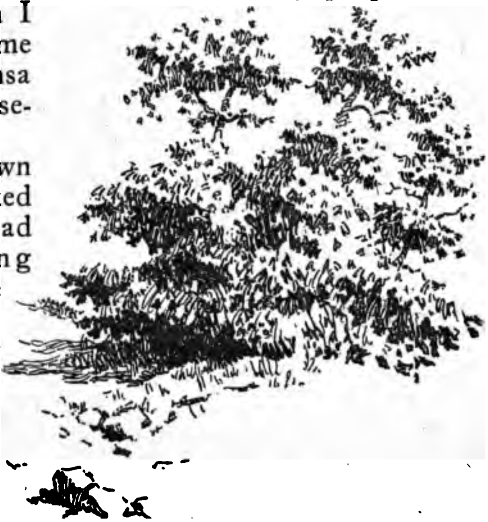
Epifanio remained motionless and thought—or perhaps he only felt. He had no schooling but that of Nature and circumstances. His life had been passed in this niggardly valley, facing the mystery of the great waste. Here he had sown and reaped the handful of barley from the little level patches of the ranch, and herded the few head of stock, or chopped wood in the mountains above. Only since his father had been killed down there on the railroad, and dry year upon dry year had cut short the crops and starved the beasts, he had worked for a few months as a section-hand and had gone once into the desert with a prospector whose "prospect" had vanished, after weeks of deadly toil, leaving the laborers without pay.

The best days that he had known had been spent in the cañons, and on the ridges of his mountains, with gun in hand, seeking deer, rabbits, ground-squirrels—anything that might fill an empty stomach, when rations were scant and there was no *dinero*. It was one of these times now. The day before, his mother had agreed with him that he must go down to the railroad station and seek work. He should have started that morning, but a fire was running on the other side of the range. It was possible that a deer or two might flee over the divide, or at any rate, a bag of rabbit or quail would help his mother tide over the days of waiting. There was only the milk from one half-starved cow and the hatful of potatoes that the dribblings from their spring had kept alive.

The situation began to shape itself in Epifanio's mind. His mother, who always had a smile and a cheering word for her son, however scant the fare or pitiless the elements, stood out sharply in his vision. They had been close companions. He had lived his childhood and youth largely in hers, as she told him over and over again of that *bonita ciudad de Mejico,* which was still home to her; of its cathedral and its schools, and of her father, who had been *un Hacendado, muy rico.* The hope of returning some day to her childhood home had been constant and strong. "It is not lonely and still, as this place; nor full of strange screams and rushing cars and wagons, like San Bernardino. It is a place of beauty and peace," she would declare with vivid gestures. And the father on his brief visits to his home, would answer soothingly, *"Si, si, Teresa,* some day we shall go back to that Sonora to leave our bones."

But her heart had grown faint of late. Last week she had spoken sadly, "I shall never see *la bonita ciudad* again, son, nor the graves of my people. But, *chiquito,* when I die thou wilt take me down to Agua Mansa and lay me in consecrated ground, no?"

The son had thrown away a half-smoked cigarette and had sworn with strong words that she should live for many years and should yet go back to Sonora



and see her old home and the grave of her father.

His mother's heart-rooted desire—and the gold there on the miner's breast. There was a connection between the two that must be solved. The boy had never before held a thought so closely, so consecutively. His head was dizzy with the effort, but he saw it all clearly.

The gold once in his own breast, the rest would be simple. His mother must take to the mountains with him. On the high trails of the San Jacintos they would be safe. Their own countrymen and the Indians whom they might meet, would never betray them to the Americans. Far to the southward his mother had a kinsman. There they could rest and outfit for the trip to Sonora.

His plans settled, Epifanio backed out from his lair and carefully scrutinized the mesa, the trails, the hills beyond, the entire horizon. Every clump and hillock, every rock and gulch was familiar, and he was soon satisfied that no human eye was upon him. Then he bent over the man while he penetrated with his eye the hiding place of the gold. With cautious touches, he unbuttoned the heavy shirt, inserted his fingers and lifted the bag from the swelling chest. As it swung free, the man stirred, threw up an arm and raised his head. With the bag in his clenched hand, Epifanio struck him a sharp blow on the forehead and the old man dropped back to the ground.

The boy was terrified. He crouched low and listened with straining ears for breath. Then he straightened up. He had not meant to hurt the old man; surely it was not death there before him. But—if it were—there was no moment to spare.

They must strike the trail and hide in the mountains as soon as possible.

He looked about once more; with sure instinct doubled once or twice upon his own tracks, then struck out, swiftly but warily, across the rising ground toward his home cañon. As he turned the bend that brought into view a low adobe house, backed against a hill so barren that every stone and water-gash stood out in sharp ugliness, a woman arose from the doorstep and came to meet him.

*"Hola,* son," she cried, "but thou hast been gone long. Thy game-bag empty! *'Sta malo,"* and she laughed. Then as she looked into his face she perceived that her boy was no longer a boy.

"What hast thou?" she questioned rapidly. "What has happened?"

His answer had been rehearsed. "There is no more feed or game in this cursed country, *madre.* We will stay here no longer to starve. Tonight—this very night, we will start and go to Juan Hermosillo's. We will be there nearer thy blessed *'ciudad'."*

She caught his arm. "What is it, my son? What hast thou done?"

"It is only that I am sick of this country and the hardness of it," he answered with poorly feigned indifference. "Come, put together what thou wilt not leave—it is little enough, God knows—and we will start. It is moonlight and the days are too hot for journeying now."

"My son, what hast thou done? Tell me," she commanded. He had never disobeyed that tone. Slowly he drew out the bag of gold and held it before her.

"It is gold," he whispered, "enough to take us to that good country, *el Mejico,* and to buy a bit of land where thou canst live in peace."

"Gold! Holy Mother! But where?"

The light in her eyes compelled the unwilling confession: "I took it from a drunken man down there under the sycamores."

"Holy Virgin," she wailed, "my son a thief!" and then she clutched his arm. "Is that all?" she gasped. "Didst thou—art thou a murderer also?"

"No!" he lied, sharply. "I did not hurt the man."

"A thief! Holy Mother!" she repeated hysterically, then shook his arm. "Drunk, didst thou say? Then perhaps he has not yet found his loss. Take the gold back to him, my son, take it back!"

Epifanio braced himself, stubbornly. "I will not do that," he said decisively. "The man is a miner. He can get more gold. But we—we will have this—or none. It is the chance the Holy Mother has put in our way."

He went inside the house and ate the food that waited for him. The mother sat down on the step again and drew the black cloth that had slipped to her shoulders over her face, while she moaned and prayed.

"She will not stay alone," Epifanio thought, "she will come when she finds that I go." He brought out ammunition and reloaded shells enough to fill up his cartridge-belt. Then he moved about the house, making his few preparations. When all was ready he went to her.

"Come, little mother," he pleaded. "Come, it is but two or three days in the mountains, and then we will be at Juan's. We shall find horses and a wagon there, and it is not far to Sonora. Juan said that."

She looked up at him with a face pitiful in its longing and despair.

"I cannot go, son. That money is bad money. The saints and the Virgin will not bless it, and they will curse thee. And, Epifanio, I care not so much for the old home. They are all gone now—*mi padre, mi madre*—all! I care more that the saints shall love thee, my son."

He listened without understanding. The saints and the Virgin were very hazy, distant unrealities; the gold, warm on his heart, was real and present. He made one more appeal, which she, with sobs, denied, then he left her and started along the trail that led to the heart of the mountains. He turned, after going some distance, and looked back. He could just distinguish her black figure kneeling against the blackness of the doorway. She was praying, he knew. He had been a few times with her to the little Catholic church down at Agua Mansa, fifty miles away, but knew nothing of what was taught there, except as the words and the life of his mother had shown it to him. He could not understand why there should be saints and crossings and fasts; he could not comprehend why the Holy Mother and the Son—and God himself—should trouble about the doings of Epifanio Lugo. But such was the faith of his mother.

In a little while he again stopped and looked behind. It was too dark now to distinguish anything at the doorway, but his eye caught a slight black shape moving swiftly down the path. His mother was going to find his victim!

If she should find the man down there dead—if she should know her son a liar and a murderer!

Terror gripped his heart. He was powerless to move, although the impulse to rush forward and hide in the darkness was strong upon him. Dropping to his knees and lifting his hands high, he prayed aloud: "Oh, Holy Mother of Jesus, and all of the saints, John and James and Peter and—Teresa and all of you—don't let that man die! I will give him back his gold. I will burn a candle in the shrine, if you will only keep him alive! Holy Virgin, hear me, hear me!"

Strength came back to him and he began to run down the cañon. The moon was not yet up and he stumbled and leaped over the rock-strewn trail in darkness. As he hurried into the open valley and neared the sycamores, the moon slid above the mountains and he could see distinctly a dark form beside a prostrate body. Poised in tense waiting, he watched his mother put the bottle to the lips, bathe the forehead, and chafe the great, coarse hands with her slender fingers. After what seemed endless time, the man suddenly drew up his knees, breathed stentoriously and, half turning, settled into a more comfortable position. Epifanio came swiftly forward and knelt by the two. As his mother lifted her face to his, he saw a marvelous transformation—from heart-crushing despair to joy beyond speech. His own veins beat full with gladness. He took the gold from his breast and she,

with deft fingers, held the shirt open. The sack slipped back into its place. The man stirred uneasily, then sank into sleep.

Without words the mother and son walked softly through the moon-bathed valley and along the hard path, flecked with soft light and black shadows, that wound through their own cañon. Within the cabin the woman threw herself upon the floor in front of a niche in the adobe wall, holding a crude picture of the Mother and Child, over which was draped the rosary and cross of her girlhood. Laughing, weeping and gesticulating with all the ardor of her warm blood, she poured out a torrent of broken thanks.

The son, with a grave face, lit a bit of tallow candle and set it within the shrine. Then he, too, knelt awkwardly beside his mother and crossing himself, muttered:

*"Gracias, Señora Virgin! Gracias!"*

# Padre Salvador's Miracle

THE bells of San Gabriel Archangel were calling with resonant clangor to the vesper service. The sun was just slipping below the black line of the western hills, leaving its flaming mantle flung across the limpid sky. In the hollow, coppery light of the moment the massive whitewashed walls of the church, the groups of slowly moving Indians, the clustered buildings and trees, glowed sharply against the soft background of brown hills and haze-folded mountains.

In a corral back of the Mission one group loomed like bronze figures against the mud walls. An Indian boy, the white heat of angry defiance burning through his dark skin and somber eyes, was poised with head thrown high and legs, bound with leather thongs, planted squarely. Before him stood Juan Perez, the mayor-domo of San Gabriel, a coiled rawhide whiplash in his uplifted hand. At one side, Corporal Duran, with his lank old face set in cynical curiosity, leaned against the wall.

In front of the church Padre Salvador, his tonsured head bare, his gray robe fluttering in the chilly evening breeze, watched from the corridor the gathering of the flock. The day's work was ended, the evening *pozoli* was eaten; a night's peaceful rest awaited; yet the priest became aware of an undercurrent of disturbance in the atmosphere. He ran keen eyes over the approaching people, then turned and passed quickly through a doorway.

"What is this, Perez?"

The rawhide had cut the air and was curling cruelly over the bare back as the father, the soft shuffle of his sandaled feet unnoted, gripped the arm of the mayor-domo and broke the force of the blow.

"Why are you punishing Hipolito without permission?" he demanded sharply.

Perez wheeled about and answered hotly: "Because he is the imp-born son of evil! He will not work—he will not go to Mass! He threatens to run away—"

"You know the rule," Padre Salvador again spoke sternly. "You are forbidden to use the lash without the consent of Padre Estenaga or myself."

"*El Padre*—I told him—and he did not forbid. He only said 'wait,' and I have waited—five days—and this dog is no more tractable!"

Truly there was no tractability in the mien of the youth who stood still, with uplifted head and unshrinking frame, awaiting the sting of the lash.

"Unbind the man," the priest commanded briefly. "I will see to it that he obeys orders. Go you and Duran to vespers," he added as the mayor-domo spitefully flung down the thongs and whip. Still mumbling *carambas* under his breath, Perez, who felt himself the mainspring of the whole establishment, reluctantly moved away.

Left alone with the Indian, who remained sullenly motionless, the father asked gently, "Why do you not wish to work, Hipolito?"

"I do not like to watch fools of sheep from day-end to day-end," came the prompt response.

Father Salvador, looking into the downcast, bitter face, thought of the wearisome inactivity of the shepherd's life and recalled that this boy was the son of a chief and used to an active and untrammeled existence. For the moment the chasm that separated the mind of the Spanish priest from the mental workings of his savage pupil was bridged and he nodded, with a glance of sympathetic understanding.

"And Juan Perez has taken away my dog, to give to Pablo, and left me two puppies—*locos!*" The neophyte's wrath broke out afresh.

"But, my son, that is because he knows thy skill in training. Thou wilt make new Pachitas of these youngsters—"

"No—it is not in them. They are not good! I will tend the sheep no more," Hipolito asserted doggedly.

"That is easily arranged," the friar smiled in relief. "You are strong; you can work in the fields or at the ditches."

An expressive gesture of distaste was the only answer. The padre continued: "And why do you not care to go to church? This grieves the holy saints and the blessed Virgin."

"They are not my gods!"

"Ah—but, child of darkness, you have no gods!" the priest spoke in pitying zeal. "And we only wish to teach you of the true God and to save your soul from hell. You came here of your own will—"

"And now I have seen! I wish to go back to my own people and my own ways."

"That may not be, since you have been baptized a son of Holy Church. Cease to think of such an evil thing," the father spoke decisively. "Come, we will go to vespers now and tomorrow I will myself find work for thee."

The Indian turned at the kindly yet compelling tone and followed the father toward the church, from which came the swelling volume of the evening song.

Two days afterward the Coahuillan and his dog, Pachita, were missing and after a day's search, Juan Perez reported the escape with a triumphant smile.

"It takes the lash—nothing less—to subdue these brutes," he announced complacently to his spiritual superior.

Padre Salvador shook his head sadly.

"If we cannot win the gentiles with kindness, we cannot whip them into belief," he answered. "Better a renegade than a hypocrite."

Already the reaction which was to destroy the mission system of the Franciscan friars had set in. Even among the most ignorant of the mission dependents the word that they were to be freed from the rule of the church was astir. The great herds and rich harvests of San Gabriel, Queen of the Missions, were depleting; the childlike, unquestioning obedience of her Indian neophytes was changing to half-smothered defiance; the powerful hold of the padres upon the destiny of the territory of California was lessening.

Six months later, as dusk fell one evening, an Indian, caked with dust and spent to exhaustion, slipped from his dripping, foam-splotched pony before the doors of San Gabriel. In gulps he told his tale. Desert and mountain Indians had joined forces and were raiding the Guachama tribe of the San Bernardino valley and threatening the branch of the church located there.

This outpost of San Gabriel had been twice attacked and destroyed before by the savages who constantly harassed the docile Guachamas, natives of the valley and children of the church. The building here now was a fortress, rather than a chapel.

"There can be little danger," Padre Salvador said confidently to his superior, Padre Estenaga. "But I will go, and take as many men as can be spared. It will relieve the fears of the Guachamas."

August heat was at its fiercest, and the rescue party started at midnight to avoid midday sun. Over parched, mustard-tangled mesas; across drifts of shining sand; along the willow-shaded windings of the Santa Ana, the little band galloped. Before noon they entered the wide gateway in the adobe-walled enclosure. They were greeted with cries of joy by the frightened natives who were crowded within. Eager voices told, with vivid pantomime, of terrifying rumors. Their enemies of old, the Piutes, with the Coahuillas and Serranos, were boasting that they would not only destroy this *asistencia,* but would march on the mother mission itself, drive out the priests and Spanish settlers and put an end to the dominion of the white man.

"Have no fear, my children," the father advised when he had heard it all, "this is the talk of big-mouths!"

Before night two scouts came in to report the approach of the enemy. "They are many—five hundred, maybe—and they have many horses and their women. They are ready for a long, fierce fight!" they reiterated, and the Guachamas trembled anew at the word.

Corporal Duran made every possible preparation for the coming assault. The neophytes, armed with bows, war clubs and rabbit sticks, were given instructions and posts. The padre said a mass. The four Spanish soldiers were stationed with their guns at the loopholes, and an outlook was placed on the roof.

It was noon the next day, however, before a cloud of dust announced the arrival of the foe. Presently a horde of naked, shouting horsemen came to pause just outside gun range. Soon two Indians dashed at full gallop toward the gate. As they drew near, the native on the roof shrieked, "It is Nippay—my brother, Nippay, there in front!"

Then the watchers saw that their own scouts, with arms bound, were held in front of the riders, each of whom carried a burning torch.

As they came closer one of the Guachamas called: "Shoot, brothers, shoot!" and flung his body to one side, revealing Hipolito, the renegade, behind him. The Coahuillan dodged bullets and arrows and at the same time plunged a spear into the back of his human shield. In another moment he had reached the gate and the main body, with a swelling chorus of yells, came tearing forward.

A curl of smoke crept above the gate, made of pine logs, baked to tinder-like inflammability. Musket-balls and arrows poured from the loopholes. Once the assailants drew back, carrying their wounded. But there was not water enough at hand to quench the flames of the now blazing wood. Soon came another onrush and the charred gate yielded to the battering of a log, wielded by dozens of eager hands.

As the gate swung open, panic seized the Guachamas. The corporal and his men fired into the entering wedge, but they could not rally the terrified natives. Huddled into the *patio* of the building, these sons of the church waited dumbly, with the women and the children, for the outcome.

In front of them Father Salvador, with a rapt face, held aloft his crucifix and rosary and prayed aloud. When the gate could no longer be held, Duran and his men fell back. The renegade, with the Piute chief — a tall, powerfully muscled man, with a face scarred, streaked by paint and crowned with a feather war bonnet—were in the lead.

"Hipolito!" the priest called, pushing forward at the sight of this rebellious convert, "Hipolito, let this bloodshed cease! What is it that your people seek?"

The young leader spoke rapidly with his companion for a moment, then they advanced and paused in front of the father.

"You come with us and the rest may go—we will let them alone," was the Coahuillan's calm proposal.

"You dog!" and Duran raised his weapon.

"No, my son, no," the father laid a restraining hand upon the arm of his defender. "Let us have no more slaughter. See!" and he pointed to a wounded man, writhing in death agony, "No more of this warfare! I will gladly go with these gentiles."

The soldiers and neophytes crowded about the padre, protesting clamorously, but he raised his hand in command and cried: "Say no more! I have no fear of Hipolito and his allies. They may kill my body, they may torture my poor flesh, even; but my soul is beyond their touch! And I should not be guiltless if I permitted more slaughter when it is in my power to prevent it."

"It cannot be, Padre! We cannot permit such sacrilege. The Holy Church will never forgive us—" Duran began, but Padre Salvador moved forward.

"Come, Hipolito, if it is my life you want, take it quickly and spare the rest," he ordered.

The Coahuillan and the Piute once more held a consultation, then gave a signal to their men, who ceased to taunt the shrinking Guachamas. Facing the priest and his followers, the young Indian, naked except for a breech-clout, yet bearing himself with the poise and assurance of the chief, spoke with a restrained but ever-increasing passion that thrilled through his voice and blazed in his flashing eyes.

"We do not care for your life. We want you to go with us and live as we live, to learn of our religion and speak our tongue and do our work, as you have made our people do yours! We wish you to see the women of your blood abused, your children torn from the arms of their mothers, your lands claimed by strangers, as ours have been! We would teach you what we, here in our own land, have borne from your countrymen!"

Padre Salvador listened in growing astonishment. In all sincerity he had felt that the catechism and the baptismal waters, administered to these heathen, saved their souls from eternal damnation. He had counted the civilizing influence of labor and of garments—even of the scantiest—as a priceless boon to these benighted savages. And yet this Indian was speaking as man to man; he felt as any Spaniard might feel toward a conquering race. The priest was confused, astonished, by the new impressions of the moment. But his duty at the instant was clear.

"I will go with you, Hipolito, wherever you may lead," he spoke promptly, "but order, both of you," he turned from the Piute chief to the Spanish corporal, "that this strife shall end."

Once more the mission guard began a protest, but the father silenced them. "It is enough. Duran, return to San Gabriel with your men and tell my good superior to have no fear. I will be in no danger. And you, Hipolito, give your word that these children of the church," he pointed to the Guachamas, "shall be left in peace."

Within an hour, the invaders, driving bands of stolen stock and bearing stores of grain, as well as the vestments and ornaments of the little chapel, were under way. The priest was placed upon a horse and rode between the leaders. He had no fear. At first, indeed, he was filled with a sense of exaltation. More than once Franciscan friars had met death unflinchingly, believing with their sainted leader, Serra, that "the blood of martyrs waters the harvest." The faith of Padre Salvador was intense enough to court martyrdom; and at the same time so child-like that as he rode hour after hour over the rough trail and weariness and discomfort grew upon him, he prayed without ceasing for succor, and began to picture some miraculous intervention in his behalf.

At the summit of the pass, the Indians camped. They remained on this wind-swept height, between the sentinel peaks of the south, for two days. The father saw that many conferences were held and a hot dispute raged. But on the third day, the Piutes went on down into the desert, while Hipolito with the priest in charge, turned southward. After hard traveling over tortuous mountain trails, they reached a Coahuilla *rancheria* on the desert side of the San Jacintos.

A brush *ramada* was assigned to the captive and a portion of acorn meal and melon brought to him. The next day he was set by Hipolito to weed the melon patch. Patiently, without protest, the priest bent to his task, while the renegade and his companions sat under the scraggly oaks and looked on. Other escaped neophytes of the church came in and gathered about the field where the father labored, rejoicing, flinging exultant and taunting words at him. But he made no reply to any insult except to murmur, with the sign of the cross, the priestly greeting, "Love God, my children, love God!"

For a week Padre Salvador was daily put to a heavy task and, each day, newcomers joined the gloating circle that mocked his degradation; Indians arrived from distant villages; desert dwellers joined their mountain brothers. It was very apparent that preparations for some unusual event were under way. Hope of rescue, of ransom, of the miracle that was to deliver him, grew fainter each day. Against multiplying humiliations and taunts, he had no weapon but prayer and constant watchfulness. His confidence in the good faith and power of Hipolito was vanishing.

The great feast began at last, at nightfall. The younger men took part in one wierd, symbolical, dance after another, while the women and the old men sat on the ground and chanted, or grunted, monotonous accompaniments, and the medicine men performed mysterious incantations in the center of the circle. The excitement and the spell of fanaticism intensified as the night passed. The priest, when he would have sought his own shack, was sternly forbidden to leave.

The flames had died low; the dancers, men and women, leaped and contorted in frenzy; the chorus, hoarse and ominous in its deep-chested reiterations, sounded to Padre Salvador's ears like a malignant threat. The culminating moment when all this untamed emotion must find an outlet was unmistakably near at hand.

The lonely watcher saw fierce glances turned toward him; caught gestures of the medicine men in his direction; watched the menacing faces of the old women as they nodded in time to the beating steps. It seemed to him now that the glory of martyrdom was very likely to be his. But his first fervor was dimmed; he prayed for resignation, yet the desire for life was strong and he moved warily, inch by inch, back into the shadows. If possible, he would at least make an effort to escape the torment that he felt awaited him.

He was startled by a light touch upon his arm and glanced behind to find Hipolito at his elbow. With a throbbing heart, he yielded to the touch and was drawn noiselessly backward still further from the dancers. Then, without speaking, the young man laid a guiding hand upon the father's arm and led him rapidly away. The night was dark and Father Salvador, weakened by unwonted hardships and scant nourishment, stumbled over rocks and chapparal and was soon gasping for breath. Hipolito seized his arm and supported him as they hurried forward.

Suddenly a long-drawn yell echoed through the mountains; cries of anger and shouts of command broke the silence of what had seemed an empty world. Hipolito, with a muttered word, gripped the priest by the shoulder and dragged him on, down the mountainside—a precipice. Stones and earth slipped with them and they crashed through undergrowth, clutching at brush and rocks as they went. At the foot, the Indian was breathless while the father sank down, utterly exhausted.

Again they heard the shouts of their pursuers, They had struck the trail. The Indian boy raised the father to his feet and took his arm. Then the priest spoke firmly. "My son, go back! There is no danger for thee—let what will come to me!"

Without answering the ex-neophyte clasped his charge with a strong arm and rushed ahead. The shouts were coming nearer and growing exultant. The flicker of torches gleamed on the hillsides above them. Whether by accident or design, a bunch of dry brush suddenly flared up, the flame leaped to another clump, then flung itself up a dead pine. Streams of fire crept in every direction, spreading into fiercely blazing pools where brakes and ferns grew thickest. The pursued and their hunters were alike in danger. The mountain was on fire!

Father Salvador planted his feet and spoke desperately: "Go, Hipolito, save thyself! For me, if God wills that I perish—so be it. Go."

The reply was sharp. "I will not leave thee, now. Water is near—"

The priest found himself jerked onward. Scorching air wrapped them around as they slid and rolled down the side of a cañon and at last reached a stream — a thread of water, bubbling and singing through a crooked, rocky bed. Hipolito, half carrying, half dragging the exhausted priest, pushed his way down the creek until he reached a shallow pool. Here he placed the father upon a flat rock and soaked the skirt of his gray robe to throw over the drooping, trembling frame.

It was not long before the blaze was eating its way down this course and the trickling water was soon licked up. The pond grew warm and gradually vanished until only ooze was left. The snarl of the coyote, the whine of wildcats, the clumsy padding of a black bear, the rustle of many unseen wild things, fleeing in terror, passed them by. Only Pachita, the sheep dog, remained crouching and yelping beside her master. The Indian lifted the inert body of the priest and laid it flat on the muddy bottom. He gathered the last drops of moisture upon the robe and covered the shaven head. With his bare hands, he tossed aside the brands and blazing leaves that rained upon the prostrate form. Sometimes he buried his own parched face in the steaming mud, and spoke soothing words to the whining dog.

At last the fury swept on and only smoking soil, devasted growth and heated rocks remained. A trickle of ash-stained water came, and with its touch the priest began to revive. When the cool air of early morning had penetrated his lungs, he was able to get to his feet again. Upheld by the Indian, he stumbled on down the valley until they came in sight of the open country.

Then his guide pointed out the smoke of a Guachama *ranchita* and said: "Now you will be safe. *Adios.*"

"Will you not return to San Gabriel with me, now, my son?" the father questioned.

But the renegade was still the renegade. He shook his head. "No. I return to my own people."

"But—will not your people do you harm? Will they not punish you?"

The boy shrugged his shoulders, then in answer to the grieved anxiety in the haggard face, he stated: "Your gods are not my gods—your ways are not my ways. But you are a good man—you saved me from the lash of Juan Perez—"

"And you—you saved my life at the peril of your own! Your own people may put you to the lash for this!" Padre Salvador cried. "It is the miracle!" He lifted his head and raised his crucifix. "It is the miracle the saints have sent to save me—the miracle of kindness!"

With trembling voice, before he turned toward the valley of safety, he pronounced the benediction of the Holy Church upon this deserter of the faith,—the instrument of his salvation.

# In the Shadow of the Mission

THE vaulted body of the old church was misty with heavy-aired gloom, through which the sun-rays from a high window cut an aisle of dusty light. An image of the Holy Mother, enshrined in a niche, was haloed by the sunbeams. Beneath, the shining hair of a bent head, the whiteness of a moving hand, was luminous against the darkness beyond.

In the sacristy doorway, a young monk clad in the grey robe of the Franciscan brotherhood stood watching the swaying poise of the firm young back, the supple turnings of the rounded arms. Unconscious, the girl glanced up at the Virgin and down again to give quick touches to her canvas.

"She's a fairer picture herself than any she will ever paint," Father Sepulveda thought, with a quick smile on his clean, dark face.

Drawn by his intent gaze, the artist suddenly turned and glanced over her shoulder. The priest looked into a face full of glad earnestness and into eyes with changing lights and depths of tenderness under their merry Irish sparkle. She seemed about to speak, and he dropped the curtain between them abruptly and turned away, his face burning, his pulses throbbing, as he caught a little ripple of laughter. "What a heaven—or hell—she'll make for some man!" he muttered, hurrying away.

The jagged outlines of the crumbling adobe walls were sharply limned against the endless blue of the summer sky. The afternoon sun threw soft, rosetinted lights upon the blotched, yellow walls and broken, shadowy arches. With intent eyes the little artist studied the coloring, the atmosphere—the charm of age and story which so appealed to her, while Father Sepulveda, strolling up and down the walk beyond, watched the artist narrowly.

As a devout daughter of the church and as an enthusiast in her art, Kathleen Fingery had now become a familiar figure to the young assistant pastor of the flock. Her winning presence had more than once overcome his shyness—and fear of temptation—to the point of speech. He had known no life since early boyhood but that of the school and the cloister. His mother, long dead, and an aunt who years since had given over the follies of the world, were the only women he had known intimately. Even a passing word with a young and charming woman was a new experience to this ascetic of thirty.

As Kathleen bent over her palette to search once more for pigments that should reflect the warm glow of the setting sun, his shadow fell across her easel and he spoke a quiet word of greeting. He looked at the sketch with the critical eye of one who loves the object pictured, then said appreciatively:

"It is well done, Miss Fingery."

"Truly, father?" She smiled into his face with the unconcealed pleasure of a child. "It seemed to me that I have missed what I most wanted to put in———"

"And what is that?"

"Oh, the devotion and the sacrifice that has gone into these walls—the years of patient, ill-requited toil—yes, and the happy, peaceful years of the good men who have spent their lives here—all the prayers, the joys, the sorrows—that the old mission has echoed to——"

He scarcely heard her words. He was looking down into the waves and twists of her uncovered hair, and his eyes had fastened upon a tendril behind her ears that wavered and trembled in the lightly stirring ocean breeze. His black eyes softened, his smile grew tender and he put out a timid finger to touch caressingly that gold-tipped, enticing ringlet.

From within the church rose the sweet ,clear voices of the boy-choir practising a processional. Swiftly the priest withdrew his hand, raised it on high, and made the sign of the cross above her head. Then he passed on.

* * * * * * *

It was midday of midsummer. The atmosphere outside was blasting in its glare and heat; within the thick-walled mission, the cool dimness blinded Father Sepulveda as he stepped inside the door and peered about for a white-robed figure.

He had seen Kathleen pass two hours before and had pushed away the puzzling, time-darkened manuscript he was transcribing, and sat for some time thereafter in unaccustomed idleness. He wanted to follow the artist, to stand by her side, listen to her laughter, watch the swift glancing of her eyes, the flashings of curves and dimples and soft colorings in her face. It was folly—harmless folly perhaps—but best denied.

Yet it had required a strong effort to resist the inclination. For the first time that morning the young priest looked squarely at this new feeling he found possessing him. This highbred, handsome son of an old and distinguished family had noted the brightening eyes, the lingering smiles of more than one woman, as he moved about his duties. But this was different—it was his own eyes that watched, his own heart that leaped, when Kathleen Fingery was near. As he looked within he discovered that this was the woman whom God had meant for him—had he not been a priest. The thought was forbidden—anathema! He thrust it from him and turned back to his work.

When his task was done, his restlessness demanded motion. He went outside and strolled aimlessly up and down the paths of the old garden. In spite of the heat, his favorite La France rosebush was heavy with bloom; he paused by it and, lifting one of the drooping heads of loveliness, gazed long into its heart. Following a sudden impulse, he gathered a handful of the roses—the blushing maidens of the rose family—and went around and through the long corridor to the church door.

She did not turn as he came down the aisle. Was she so unconscious? Did she not know that he was coming to her? His thought shamed him when she raised her head and he saw the glad surprise in her face. But she welcomed him with the graceful touch of reverence for his calling that she had always shown.

"I am the priest alone to her," he thought with sudden resentment for her attitude. Deliberately, he cast aside his customary austerity and greeted her with the frankly admiring eyes, the warm handclasp of a man. Leaning carelessly against the wall by her side he began to talk—of her work, of art, of books, of the parish gossip. She fell into his mood and, under the spell of his unbending, almost forgot his office, as she laughed and retorted to his provoking, with the happy assurance of the woman who is used to please. In her excitement her cheeks flushed to the delicate tint he most loved and he suddenly bent over her, lifted one of the roses and laid it softly, caressingly, against her cheek.

"There is perfect harmony," he said.

She looked up with the gladsome light that an unsought compliment always brings. "Why," she cried, merrily, "An Irishman couldn't have made a prettier speech!"

He did not answer. He had lifted his eyes from her responsive face to the cross above the altar—the symbol of self-denial, of purity, of sacrifice—all that his life had been consecrated to. Muttering a word of parting, he laid the sheaf of roses across her knees and left her.

With a disturbed face, she lifted the flowers. An uncomfortable sense of something amiss seemed to mingle with their fragrance, and she tossed them impatiently aside and turned again to her painting.

No vagueness or self-deception now clouded Father Sepulveda's perception of the truth. He knew that the supreme test of his life had come. He loved Kathleen with an earthly love that was forbidden by all the canons of the church and the dictates of his best judgment. He had conquered temptation in the past; he had satisfied his heart with devotions and good works—and now these things counted as nothing when he remembered her upturned face and shining eyes.

The priest set himself heavy penances and redoubled his labors. Yet the vision of the woman whom he loved persistently rose before him. He put it sternly from him; he vowed in all sincerity that he would not be mastered by the flesh. Sometimes he felt that he had conquered—then he could look with calm rejoicing at her perfection, as she knelt in her place at mass; then he could greet her with the benignant dignity fitting to a pastor and a guide. But again the human side asserted itself and he longed fiercely for her presence, her friendship, her love—for all the companionship and sympathy from which his vows cut him off forever.

* * * * * * *

A cloudless winter day was thickening into a moonless night, as Father Sepulveda hastened from the bedside of a dying child. He turned abruptly a corner over which a hovering pepper tree threw a deeper gloom, and brushed against a woman. She drew back, startled, and he recognized then that it was Kathleen.

He looked at her without speaking. The last glow of the daylight, reflected from the ocean horizon, revealed deepening color in her face, and drooping eyelids. A sudden strong craving for some recogtion of his own feeling overpowered him. He caught her two hands in his own; he leaned forward and looked into her eyes.

Clear and resonant in the utter silence that separated them from all the world, for the moment, came the first clash of the vesper bell. He released her quickly, almost roughly, drew his robe closer and hastened on without a word.

He saw clearly enough what he had done and he burned with self-contempt. That night he uttered no prayers; but he lashed his own soul for the weakness that had led him to imperil the happiness of a sweet-souled woman. Had she understood? Had there been a flash of answering light in her eyes? That would mean pain, suffering, shame—for her. If he had chosen some other life—if he were free to love her—and she loved him! The vision of what her love might be, of the home she would make and the children she might bear, was before him. And all of this belonged, by right, to some other man. He himself had been chosen and consecrated to a higher estate.

Was it higher? Questions and doubtings of what he had always looked upon as infallibly settled stirred within him. The battle of the man, for the first time fully aroused, and of the priest, was a bitter one. But when his vigil ended, his course was plain before him. He must never look at nor speak with the girl again. He would confess his fault and call upon all the rites of the church to aid in atonement, and he must so fill his life with devotion and with holy deeds that all thought of earthly love should be forever barred out.

Kathleen Fingery made no more sketches of the old Mission and seldom appeared at the services. For weeks the father did not see her—nor think of her—except in his daily prayer that she might forget and that he might be forgiven. But an unsought glimpse of her face harassed him by the change it revealed. The buoyant gladness of expression which had so attracted him was lacking; the laughing spark in her blue eyes seemed to have vanished. The possibility that she cared for him and was grieving for his sake was torture. But he could do nothing. He scarcely dared pray for her; for the thought that she might love him gave thrills of joy, in spite of his belief in the hopelessness and the wrong of it.

In the days that followed Father Sepulveda grew thin and worn, and his confreres and parishioners continually admonished and reproached him for his ceaseless toil and midnight vigils.

The young priest was called to the confessional one morning to take the place of an absent brother. The dingy, wooden box, chill and damp under the adobe belfry, was redolent of the sordid peccadillos, the crude egotisms and heart burnings, the black sins, that had been laid bare there by generations of worshipers. Father Sepulveda always shrank from this office, and this morning as each unseen figure finished its confession of temptations and weakness, he sighed with relief.

The soft sweep of trailing skirts approached and a new form knelt without. It was not until a soft voice murmured: "Bless me, father, for I have sinned," that he knew—— Without waiting for response, she went on rapidly with the wail of the confiteor:

"I have sinned exceedingly in thought and word and deed. I have committed a mortal sin——"

"A mortal sin, my daughter?" he interrupted hastily.

She started and looked up hastily. Her face, already pale with emotion, grew ashen, then slowly reddened until it was crimson.

"I thought," she stammered, "I thought it was Father Malone."

"Yes," he answered, "Father Malone has been called away. You can wait, if you wish until he returns, or——" he finished swiftly, "I would gladly absolve you."

She hesitated, then with hidden face, began again:

"I have sinned—I have let my thoughts dwell where they had no right to dwell. I have desired a thing that was wrong—that was a sin. God knows I have tried to overcome it———"

She stopped and he gently asked, "Why was it wrong?"

"Because it was a sacrilege," she spoke almost inaudibly; then added, brokenly, "I cannot go on, father. Give me a penance—a life-long penance, and I will gladly perform it."

"Do you repent?"

"I repent of all evil that I have done."

"And you are resolved to put this evil from you?"

"Yes," she whispered, "I will try."

He clinched the crucifix in his hands and his breath came heavily. By virtue of his sacred office he must judge and condemn her—for loving himself. He must bid her put the thought of that love away as evil. His whole soul rebelled. Such love as theirs was not sin! It was God-ordained—was it not possible———"

"Christ help me," he prayed in terror of his own thought; and out of his need came strength. Presently he spoke quietly, firmly:

"You have commited no mortal sin. You have loved, is it not so? and where love was forbidden?"

She made no answer, and he went on with the new-found assurance of inspiration:

"Such love as yours is no sin. It is the holiest—the purest—thing upon earth! But it is right that you should not yield to it—not because it is sin, but because you must live your life in the world, and you must not cut yourself off from love and home on account of this love which must remain alone and unsatisfied. The only penance is—that you forget——"

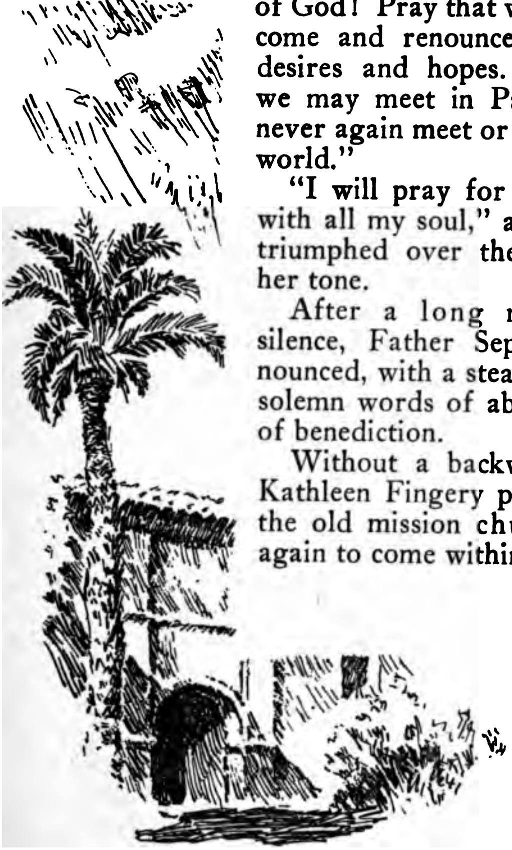
She raised her head and spoke calmly: "I cannot forget."

"Then, pray without ceasing that you—and the man who loves you—may be resigned to the decree of God! Pray that we may overcome and renounce all earthly desires and hopes. Pray that we may meet in Paradise—but never again meet or speak in this world."

"I will pray for these things with all my soul," a note of joy triumphed over the anguish in her tone.

After a long moment of silence, Father Sepulveda pronounced, with a steady voice, the solemn words of absolution and of benediction.

Without a backward glance, Kathleen Fingery passed out of the old mission church—never again to come within its shadow.



# A Tooth—and a Tooth

---

NO troubadour of old was ever more happily content in today or more unconcerned of tomorrow than was Mariano Bovét. In days when the lust of dollar gathering has taken foothold in the heart of our mountains and the bowels of our deserts, when the deadly trail of enterprise has devastated the furthest corner of the West, Mariano remained a recession to past ages. Somewhere in the mingled bloods that pulsed through his veins there must have been minstrel stock. His life had but one genuine passion. Music was his pastime and his occupation.

To look at, Mariano was a heavy, swarthy-skinned, pock-marked quarter-breed, clad in dingy shirt and faded overalls. But with the guitar in his hand, dream light came into the dull face, while the deft fingers drew forth strains that caught and held the listener, whoever he might be. He sang, too. With his head thrown back and his eyes closed, in a fluid, appealing, high tenor, he warbled love songs or ballads, in Spanish, Indian or French, as the inspiration came.

Year after year, for almost two generations, Bovét wandered from Temecula to Tia Juana, playing and singing at fiestas, weddings and dances. No festivity of the Spanish speaking population of the "back country" was complete without his presence, and it was traditional that asleep—or drunk—it made no difference with his tempo. Night after night he could play on, with a swing and a verve that gave no rest to tripping feet.

It was after the wet season of '93, when crops had been unusually bountiful and fiestas and weddings many that Mariano, for the first time in his life, found himself with spare gold in his pocket. At once he determined on fulfilling a life-long desire. Swinging into the saddle, he turned the head of his pinto pony toward Los Angeles. He would visit *el ciudad,* spend his gold and taste of city life in the scattering.

Visits to Riverside and San Diego had given a passing acquaintance with electric lights and trolley cars. But when he was safely domiciled with Pedro Gomez, second cousin of his mother, and found himself actually switching on twinkling lights and signalling street car conductors, he seethed inwardly with French effervescence. although outwardly he bore himself with all the watchful indifference of his Indian-Spanish ancestry.

He had barely sampled the delights of the city, however, when a hollow tooth made him its victim. For a week he bore all the pains a rebellious tooth can inflict, then he yielded to the persuasions of his city-wise host and, in a clammy chill of fear, was led to a dentist. When the touch of a needle dipped into a bottle worked magic and stopped the pain at once, the novice gasped in bewildered relief. But when he found the dentist poising a clawlike instrument above his head, he sat up with a yell of dissent. He had seen traveling dentists yank out teeth and leave yawning gaps behind. He, the minstrel, singing love songs, with an ugly toothless hole in plain sight—he saw the mental picture and in three languages—hopelessly mixed yet unmistakably clear as to meaning, he refused to permit the picture to be made real.

After a vain argument, the dentist explained, and illustrated, how the tooth might be treated and crowned with gold; but carefully impressed the fact that the process would cost ten dollars. When Mariano grasped the possibility of a front tooth of gold, instead of a commonplace, everyday tooth, he was as enthusiastic in his assent as he had been emphatic in his refusal. Valiantly he bore the pain of nerve-killing and the terror of glittering instruments of torture plying about him. Gladly he drew the gold from his pocket to exchange for the gold in his mouth.

His return journey, when once he was on his own ground, was almost like a triumphal procession. No general ever displayed his decorations with more pride than Mariano showed his gold-crowned tooth. He felt that it had been won, in truth, through a suffering and a valor before which the feats of war were puerile. And after this, he was distinguished in the recesses of San Diego County not only as *"el troubadour"* but also as *"el hombre del diento oro."* (The man with the gold tooth.)

As years went on, the ever-increasing tide of back-East settlers and English second-sons, added to the meddling restrictions of Indian agents and foolish laws, brought disaster to Mariano. Festal days began to come far apart as to time as well as to place, while the new ways of the thrifty so tempered the spirit of hospitality among his own people that the troubadour was robbed of the hearty and unlimited welcome which had once offset any shortage of income. There were cold nights when Mariano found no warm corner; there were rainy days when he became an unbidden guest beneath whatever shelter was nearest. And at last touches of rheumatism began to send twinges through the fingers that brought bread. Sometimes, in this overturning of his unsophisticated world, the minstrel was compelled to lay down the guitar and take up the shovel and pick—to keep a shirt upon his back and cigarettes between his teeth.

It was after a month's labor with a grading outfit that Mariano was ready, at last, to listen to the advice of his life-long friend, Juan Pacheco.

"You go marry a woman with a ranch. Then you can play the guitar and sing, and take life easy"—that was the gist of it.

"That is good," Mariano assented, "but where is that woman with a ranch?"

"You go far—you know many—do you not know one woman with land, and with no man?"

Mariano turned his mind inward and journeyed from one end of his range to the other, glancing into every valley, every cañon, and downwards toward the coast.

"There is Dolores Ruiz, at Jamul," he spoke thoughtfully. "But she has six children—and those boys of hers are devils!"

"Yes," Juan agreed. "They smoke cigars and wear collars of white paper—they are no good."

"And Paciencia Dupuy—old Dupuy left her everything, but she is sixty—"

"What of that?" Juan asked cheerfully. "She will stay at home and let you go in peace. She'd not bother about a smile or two for the girls—"

Naturally, the life of Mariano had not been without romance. As a matter of fact, it had been rather a continuous succession of romances from his youth to the very certain middle age he had now attained. But he had been fortunate — or adroit. None of these affairs had ever tied him up. He was still a debonair courtier whenever — or wherever — fair women danced to his tunes.

"No," Mariano pronounced, after weighing the matter, "she is too ugly and the tongue in her is harsh. No, I don't want to marry Señora Dupuy—not though she owned a gold mine."

Then after a long rumination, Juan exclaimed hopefully, "Look, *hombre,* here's the lady for you! Juana Abascal—you know her. She's no man's leavings. She's always staid close with her mother and her grandfather, and now they are both gone and she has the place. It's not much, but it will keep two. And she's the best cook in the San Jacintos—and not too old, neither."

"I'll go and see Juana," Mariano said, after a contemplative puff or two. "I have not seen her for—it was at Pedro Brown's wedding fiesta that I saw her last—ten—fifteen years ago. Time moves, eh? She was not bad looking, as I remember her."

"*Dios,* man!" Juan was impatient. "What do you care for the face, if the fireside is warm and the fig trees bear well?"

But Mariano, in spite of his rheumatic joints and his long experience with women, still had his ideals. When he shut his eyes and sang of love, to his vision appeared fair faces and answering eyes. A comfortable home might be desirable—but he would look at the woman who went with it first.

Two days later he strolled up the path that led between Castilian rose and pomegranate bushes to the door of Juana Abascal. And, presently, he was recognized with a cry of joyful surprise, greeted warmly, and ushered within the door. Juana was no longer the lithe girl he remembered. She was loose of flesh and unshapely of waist, and there were furrows in her flabby cheeks and crows' feet about her eyes. Still, there was an air of wholesome comeliness about her. Her blue calico was fresh from the tub and the iron. Her heavy hair was neatly braided and adorned with combs of celluloid. His first appraisal, as she settled into her rocking chair opposite him, was approving.

He looked about the room. The fireplace was wide. The plank floor was clean. The big bed in the corner was snowy under coverlid and cases adorned with needlework. Through the door beyond he caught glimpses of a well-stocked cupboard and a cook stove. He turned to Juana and smiled—his own flashing, gold-toothed smile. In answer, she laughed aloud, displaying a gaping cavity—a front tooth gone from the upper jaw. Mariano's heart flopped downward at the sight. Could he face that black hole every time he looked into his wife's face? Could he introduce a lady with such a defect to his comrades and admirers and sponsor her at the festivities to which his calling led him? He almost forgot himself and tapped his own gold tooth in the depths of his contemplation.

Juana Abascal, having no clue to the abstraction of her visitor and not being a fluent talker, fell silent. With her mouth closed, she was passable; even, as he observed the olive orchard across the road, she was pleasing in his eyes. And, presently, he roused himself and began to speak of mutual friends and past gaieties. When they had swung round the little circle of their common interests, she asked him to play to her. He took his guitar and, touching the strings softly, he struck into a plaintive Mexican air. The breath of the artist dwelt in this untaught soul. He sang melodiously, tenderly, seeing—not Juana Abascal, fat, middle-aged, unbewitching,—but the dark, soft eyes, the red, curving lips of a dream woman.

And Juana, as she listened to the song, was dazzled by the flashing, golden crown. She scarcely heard the singer in her admiration for that feat of the dentist's art, as she enviously set her tongue in the emptiness between her own teeth. When he put his guitar down she asked him to share her dinner. With the savory odor of *frijoles* and *tortillas* tickling his heartstrings, Mariano put aside useless visions and told stories that made Juana's merry laugh ring out. But her back was turned to him as she stepped from stove to table, or he looked the other way, when she faced him, with the fatal gap in evidence.

Thus began the wooing of Mariano Bovét and Juana Abascal. It was not so brief a matter as Mariano and Juan, his advisor, had anticipated. It took two or three visits to bring the suitor to the point where he could overlook the lost tooth of the lady. But the apparent advantages of the little establishment—the bit of pasture, the barley field, the garden watered by a spring, and the orchard which brought in a varying but certain income, these were not to be thus easily acquired elsewhere. Then there was a cow, a horse or two, chickens, calves—

all of this meant a comfort and a certainty the minstrel had never experienced. It might bring responsibilities, too, a tying down and binding of will that he had always avoided. The vagabond instinct was still strong in Mariano. It was not without reluctance that he at last spoke.

To his astonishment, for he had been confident he had but to speak in order to annex Juana and her all, she held off, refusing to give an answer until she could pray to "good San Antonio" for guidance. Juana, though she had lived all her life on this secluded ranch and for years had devoted herself to her aged ones, was not without wisdom. She knew Mariano's record. She was quite aware of his lack of worldly goods and understood perfectly that he was seeking her hand for her possessions rather than for herself. It may be, too, that she had her own ideals. Perhaps a stubby man, with brush-like hair and beard, and no assets save a broken-winded pony, a battered guitar and a cheap silver watch, did not match her inner vision. At any rate, she positively refused to be hurried in her deliberations.

During two weeks of solicitude on his part—possibly it was coquetry on hers—Mariano almost regretted his own hesitation. The desirability of the woman and her belongings augmented until he quite lost sight of the missing tooth. One day he appeared at her door and, without urging his suit, he sat down on the step and sang—sang the crooning, fantastic melodies of the Indian race whose blood ran in their veins, the pathetic, enticing airs of their Spanish forebears, gay chansons in the patios of his Basque father. The woman listened with fascinated eyes upon the golden tooth. To her he was a man of the world, his music was art; but—crowning glory was the bit of dentistry that adorned his mouth. In the dusk of the brief twilight, she forgot the man and his avarice and yielded to the fascination of his voice and his tooth. While he, at the moment, shut his eyes to wrinkles and toothlessness, in the assurance of a home.

But the eyes of Mariano did not remain long closed. Much to his discomfiture, for he had given little thought to the marriage ceremony, his fiancé insisted upon making a wedding feast for herself. He had half hoped that she might be content with an agreement which could easily be terminated if he found himself too much constricted—such arrangements were not uncommon in their social layer. But, his *señorita* was a faithful daughter of the Church and moreover, she had not waited so long to dispense with any of the perquisites of the wedding day. She announced with the calm assurance of the purseholder that her friends must be bidden, her dress bought in town, and the priest brought from San Juan.

And when the word spread that Mariano, who had played the wedding march, sung the wedding songs and marked time for the wedding dancers, from mountain crest to coast, was himself to be groom, there was prompt response. From cañons and reservations, from Temecula and San Jacinto, from Pala and beyond, came word of preparations. Mariano, with that prescience which is so often a fatal gift, saw himself standing beside a bride who matched his beautiful gold tooth with a yawning gap. He saw Josefa, with grave eyes and dancing dimples, and with teeth of pearl—all in place; he saw Carmelita, with chubby figure and never-ending smile, revealing an unbroken row of gleaming teeth—he saw many maids and matrons with whom he had sometime played the game of love, all gazing with eager, curious eyes at his bride and then suppressing smiles or choking giggles.

As usual he sought Juan Pacheco. "I wish not to have this wedding feast," he swore. "I cannot stand before all those people with a toothless woman! I will go away—I will hide in the mountains or go out into the desert! I did not count on such foolishness—"

"You fool!" Pacheco consoled him, "you would lose a forty-acre ranch of good land for one tooth!"

"The ranch to the devil! But I have given my word—I cannot leave her to get married alone." He lapsed into gloom. "Why did I ever look twice at her? I know always at first sight what is good"—was his useless moan.

"Such a trouble about one little tooth," Juan grumbled. "What does a tooth more or less matter?"

But Mariano continued to see hidden smiles and joking whispers. He was a saddened and chastened bridegroom. "If only I had gold," he reflected bitterly, "I could take her to the city and the tooth doctor could make a new tooth!" His faith in the man who had turned a molar into an ornament was unlimited. "But it would take golden eagles—and I cannot ask her for them, yet. Besides, there is no time—"

The next morning as he sat brooding despondently underneath the pepper tree, he noticed a white stick in the hands of Anita, Juan's youngest. He coaxed the plaything from the child and examined it thoughtfully, then he drew a nickel from his pocket and bargained with the little one for the broken handle of a tooth-brush. All the morning he worked with knife and a bit of glass. Then he put a small white object in his pocket and took his way across the hills to Juana's house.

He listened with patience to her report of progress and gossip. She was almost girlish in her zest over her belated wedding and the importance of every detail connected with it. Then he began, cautiously, delicately:

"But one thing mars the sweetness of thy smile, *señorita.*"

The smile widened—his compliments had not been many—she had been disappointed, almost indignant, at his coolness.

"You—you have lost a tooth," he finished bluntly.

To his surprise her eyes filled with tears. "Yes, *señor,*" she said humbly. "And you have that beautiful gold tooth! If I but had one, too! Could the toothman make me one, do you think?"

"We cannot wait for that now," he responded gleefully, "but see!" He held up the carefully shaped tooth of his own making. "Let me fit this in place and no one will know a tooth is lost!"

With a blessing to San Antonio, she opened her mouth. When her lover had carefully measured and fitted his tooth, before he fell to work upon it, for the first time, he kissed the lips of his bride. With cunning touch he carved prongs and grooves and turned and shaped his handiwork until he could fit it into place and it held tight. To the appearance, Juana's quota of teeth was complete. True, it required care to keep the new tooth in position, but she quickly learned to adjust it with her tongue whenever it slipped.

On the wedding day, while their guests feasted and danced in their honor, bride and groom stood side by side and smiled at one another and at their friends in toothful complaisance. The golden tooth of the dentist's art was fairly matched by the home-made tooth of celluloid that adorned the mouth of the bride.

And the artistic soul of Mariano Bovét was satisfied.

# The Bluff of Don José Morales

THE schooner Saucy Jane had dropped anchor off Deadman's Island and her longboat swung alongside the landing at San Pedro. As her captain stepped upon shore his glance fell upon Don José Antonio Morales, whose sturdy figure swayed in unison with every motion of his restless roan, as he watched the unloading of a *carreta* of hides. His bronzed face, in its setting of white hair and broad *sombrero,* was like a yellow ivory miniature in its immobility, but a welcoming smile that warmed the heart swept over it as he wheeled about at the captain's ringing call:

"Ah, Don José! thou art the one man in California I most wished to see!"

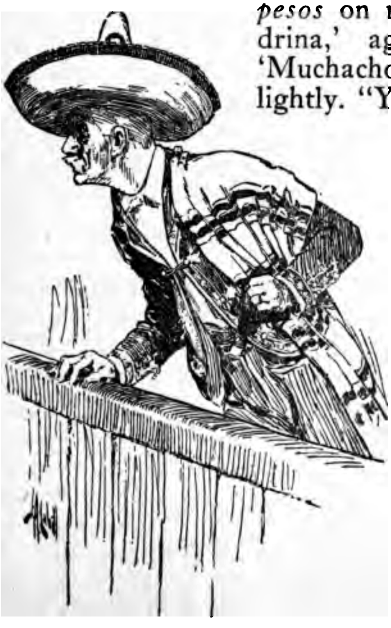
*"Y porque, amigo?"* Don José demanded, clasping cordially the extended hand, "What hast thou brought for me this trip?"

"If you can leave that red devil long enough, come out to the Jane with me and I'll show you," the captain answered.

Don José glanced with such evident reluctance toward the vessel, which was gently pitching in the offing, that the seaman threw back his head with laughter. "I'll not drown you, Don José," he shouted, "unless it's in wine, nor spill you into the water—and I'll show you the prettiest thing you ever laid eyes on! Come, Señor Morales," and he drew Don José to one side and spoke low and rapidly. Ten minutes later the boat, carrying the captain and the Californian, was bobbing across the water.

In 1850 there were not many residents in the vicinity of the port of San Pedro, and none of these were that night aroused by the dipping oars of a boat which was beached on the shore a mile or more from the regular landing. No one heard the violent splashing of water, the hushed oaths in English and in Spanish, and the galloping of horses, muffled as it was by sand and grass.

A week after the Saucy Jane had completed her lading and sailed away, Don José Morales rode, one morning, into *el Pueblo de Los Angeles* and, after galloping up one street and down another, met Don Luis Abila in front of the church door. The two men greeted each other with ceremonious politeness. Then Don José asked carelessly, "What sayest thou to a race, Don Luis? I will stake five thousand *pesos* on my mare, 'La Golondrina,' against your gelding, 'Muchacho'." Don Luis laughed lightly. "You remember the last race, Don José?" he cried.



"I remember," Morales answered grimly.

"And—well, if you wish to risk your pesos, certainly I will accept your challenge with gladness. But your mare—'La Golodrina,' I do not know her."

"Thou wilt know her when this race is over," Don José answered with confidence. "But the conditions—Don Luis, it shall be four and one-half miles and return, no? and when? and where?"

"It matters not to me," Luis Abila returned with well affected indifference, "Muchacho has won in many places and under many conditions, as thou knowest."

His courteous tone added a sting to his words and he continued with a visible touch of malice, "And thou hast given him another opportunity."

"This will be his last race," Don José returned, as he rode away.

"I have heard that before from the Morales," Don Luis called after him.

It was true enough. For twelve years now the contest between the families of Morales and Abila had been bitterly waged. It had begun when Fernando, the youngest brother of Don José, had backed his colt against the black Diablo of Don Luis Abila. The boy—only eighteen—had boasted—Don Luis had taunted. Being a Morales, Fernando had raised his bet. When he had lost, as was inevitable, his father, stern old Don Francisco Morales, had refused to pay the score, because he despised Don Luis as a trickster. Don Luis had brought suit to enforce the payment—a suit that was taken from the local court to the territorial *junta*—to the Governor of California and, finally, to Mexico. In its day it had been indeed a *cause celebre.* No final decision had ever been reached—only hard feeling and endless rivalry had resulted, for which many a poor brute had paid the penalty. Horses had been bred and trained by each side to win the honors and the gold of its rivals. California and Mexico had been searched for horseflesh that should win out against the stock of the Abilas, or the Morales, as the case might be.

But for three years now the bay gelding of Don Luis had been invincible. Don Luis swore that no horse in California could beat him—and backed the statement with a standing offer of a thousand *pesos* in gold, and a thousand head of steers.

Naturally, Don José Morales' challenge for so large an amount on an unknown and untried horse aroused wonder. The entire *pueblo* was soon alive with it and the news spread with astonishing rapidity to the surrounding ranchos throughout the community. Bets were many and large, for the Morales family—and they were no mean share of the population of California at that time—backed the horse of Don José, though they knew no more about it than did Don Luis Abila himself.

Word of the transaction was passed on to San Diego, to Santa Barbara, to Monterey. Wonder gave way to speculation, speculation to curiosity and then to investigation. Parties of horsemen almost daily visited San Marcos, the princely domain of Don José. They were welcomed there with all the graciousness of the most gracious host in California. They looked about and saw herds of cattle, bands of horses, flocks of sheep — but they saw no strange mare that gave promise of speed. Other parties, who did not approach the hacienda, visited the *vaqueros,* beset the mayor-domo, even questioned the shepherds — all to no avail.

From Monterey to San Diego there was no report of a strange horse having been brought into the country, and the mysterious "La Golondrina" became the chief subject of conjecture and the one topic of conversation among *los hijos del pais.* Don Luis now declared openly that Don José had merely rechristened his Anita, who had already been beaten a half-dozen times. There were not those wanting who asserted that Don José had lost his head and become *loco* in his great desire to triumph over the Abilas.

Even the brothers, sons-in-law and nephews of Don José began to question uneasily among themselves and to hint as boldly as they dared—which went no further than an anxious *quien sabe?*—when Don José asserted stoutly that neither Muchacho nor any other horse in the territory could outrun his "La Golondrina," and that he would stake his all upon it. But the old man would answer no hints nor questions, nor vouchsafe any information whatever concerning the mare until Antonio came home. Antonio was his only son, now secretary to his excellency, Governor Alvarado. When he told his father that he had risked everything, even his official position upon the outcome of this race, and had become alarmed at the gossip circulating throughout the country, Don José laughed aloud. And that same day, at siesta time, he and Antonio rode quietly away across the hills. They returned at sunset, and the face of Antonio was as bright and his smile as confident as his father's own.

When the guests of the hacienda gathered eagerly about him, in answer to a nod from his father, he told them that he had seen "La Golondrina," and had seen her run.

*"Por Dios!"* he cried, with upturned eyes, "It is

the sight to make the heart sing! I have never before seen a horse!"

The word was spread from Morales to Morales and soon reached the ears of the Abila following and of Don Luis. Don Luis swore then that he, too, would behold this mysterious and marvelous beast. He spent days thereafter riding with his mayordomo over the country, inspecting every hidden pasture and mountain fastness of which he knew or was told — but he learned nothing. Señor Morales had covered his tracks well, or else — he was running a huge bluff! Don Luis and his backers now openly asserted the latter and declared that they had lost all faith in "La Golondrina." She was merely a figment of Don José's brain, invented to ease his wounded pride — and to fool gulls.

*"Es bueno,"* Don José remarked, when this statement was reported to him, "it is well, indeed."

The race was set for the tenth day of September, at two in the afternoon. The course had been laid out on a level stretch, two miles south of Los Angeles. As the day approached, the male population of California—not only the *rancheros,* the *caballeros* and the few American merchants and settlers, but the *vaqueros,* and the Mexican and Indian *hombres* of every degree, drifted toward the race-course. And every one who could raise a *peso,* bet something, often everything he possessed, upon the coming contest. The odds were heavily in favor of Muchacho. Reckless as the Californians were, betting "unsight and unseen" was too much for any but the staunchest friends of Don José Morales. And, in spite of Antonio's testimony, many — even of the family — doubted the existence of any such animal as the much-vaunted mare, and based their bets upon the supposition that Don José would run some one of his numerous broncos.

It was nearly noon, and the sun was pouring fiercely upon the plain, when a cloud of dust announced the approach of Don José and his party. The excitement became intense as the assembled throng saw, surrounded by horsemen, a smooth-faced young Englishman, leading behind him a horse that was certainly a stranger in the land. Slender of muzzle, delicate of limb, long of body, deep of chest, she carried her head like a queen, stepping as though she spurned the soil of California.

As the Morales following crowded around her, a shout of defiant approval went up from them. Here, indeed, was a horse — such a horse as had never before been seen in California — an English thoroughbred — with a pedigree! Presently there was a hush while Don Abel Stearns, *compadre* of Don José, translated the pedigree.

But, could this dainty, high-born lass outrun rough and ready Muchacho, with wind like a steam-engine and the strength of a bull? The Abilas, after a careful inspection, averred not.

"She is but a plaything, not a race-horse!" Don Luis cried with fine scorn.

Don José, who heard the words, came forward and spoke gravely: "I will wager ten thousand *pesos,* in stock and in lands, that my plaything can beat your race-horse," he said.

Don Luis flushed and laughed nervously, but, without an instant's hesitation, he rode forward and took the proffered paper, thus doubling the amount he himself staked, and risking all that was left of his once great possessions.

The Americans began to put their money on the English horse, but the Californians, except the relatives of Don José, still backed Muchacho. They knew what he could do.

At two o'clock the space was crowded with an eager, restless throng of horsemen, between whom straggled a mass of humanity. The horses were led out promptly, Muchacho ridden by a lithe young vaquero, also bare-backed and bare-legged. He carried a heavy, rawhide quirt. The young Englishman, slender and clean of limb, with a light riding saddle and a light whip, was a revelation to his California onlookers. The gelding pulled and plunged viciously, while the mare, thrilling and snorting with excitement, stood poised for the start.

At last the signal was given. The horses, held down fiercely by their riders, dashed away neck to neck. The crowd shouted, and shifted uneasily to better view the flying animals. The course was long; the strain on horses, riders and watchers was alike intense. As they neared the last stake, Muchacho's rider was laying stinging blows on the quivering flanks of his animal, which swept around the stake at least two lengths ahead of his rival. Then the Englishman used his whip. The mare leaped forward until again the two were running neck to neck. With wild cries of encouragement the backers of the California horse urged it forward, while the vaquero rained blows at every leap. But "La Golondrina" still held her own. As they swung into the last quarter silence fell upon the multitude; even the horses seemed to catch the spirit of the moment and ceased their plunging and stamping.

On either hand of the judges sat Don Luis and

Don José. Don Luis was pale and the hand that shaded his eyes trembled as he leaned forward in his seat. Don José was smoking a cigarette, and only the fierce keenness of his eyes betrayed the strain. But when the horses, still neck to neck, were within twenty rods of the stake, he dropped his cigarette and shouted savagely: "Lay on the whip, you fool! Lay on the whip!"

The jockey bent low and used cruelly—not only the whip, but the spurs. And the mare, her eyes blazing, the white foam spurting from her lips, answered. Her black muzzle passed the red one—her head—her neck—she leaped across the line a full half-length ahead of Muchacho!

Cheers, yells, laughter, oaths, tears—confusion compounded—reigned. In its midst Don Luis passed in front of the judges and bowed before Don José. His face was ashen, but his voice was steady.

"You have won, Señor. 'La Golondrina' has no equal in California."

*"Gracias,* Don Luis," his rival cried, heartily, extending his hand, "you are a true *caballero,* as your father was before you."

Then the old man laid a caressing hand upon the panting, dripping thoroughbred, and loosing the bridle, he dropped it to the ground.

"Thou hast run thy last race, my queen," he cried, "henceforth no bit shall ever guide thee. Thou hast earned thy freedom!"

Baring his head, he raised his hand. A sudden hush fell about him as he spoken solemnly:

"Never again shall I stake honor and gold upon the speed of any horse. This is the last race of Don José Morales!"

And report says that Don José kept his word. But the gossips of his day add that he had won $50,000 upon "La Golondrina" and that he was then well-nigh seventy years of age—it was time that he should turn his mind from earthly things.

---

J. J. Warner, in his Centennial History of Los Angeles County, says: "The pioneers of 1850 were passionately fond of the turf. They might justly boast of their horses which had sometimes drawn applause at the capital of Mexico. Now, and for many successive years, they gave full play to this passion. August 16th, 1851, Don Pio Pico and compadre, Tomaso Yorba, gave their printed challenge 'to the North' with bold defiance—'the glove is thrown down, let him who will take it up'—for a nine-mile race, the stake 1000 head of cattle, worth $20.00 apiece, and $2000; a codicil, as it were, for two other races. March 21st following, the nine-mile heat, two miles south of the city of Los Angeles, between the Sidney mare, Black Swan, backed by José Sepulveda, and the California horse, Sarco, staked by the challengers, was run. The mare won by 75 yards in 19 minutes and 20 seconds. Sarco, the previous Spring, had run nine miles in 18 minutes and 45 seconds. Not less than $50,000 must have changed hands over this race."

# The Word of a Californian

SEÑOR DON JOSÉ MARIA LOPEZ waved his hand negligently toward the bizarre collection of silks, cottons, velvets, sacking, shoes, furniture, kegs, boxes and barrels which was assembled on the port side of the vessel, and said carelessly:

*"Esto es por mio."*

Salem Peabody, fresh from New England, and as ignorant as the salted codfish he dealt out, of the ways of Californians, asked in a hurried aside of the mate:

"What's he say?"

"Says he'll take that stuff," growled the first mate, who had sailed up and down the Pacific coast before.

"Land o' Goshen!" Salem ejaculated, "he ain't even asked what a single thing was w'uth—jest picked 'em out. It'll take me half a day to figger out the account——"

Señor Lopez had already turned away. Having purchased a year's supply of sundries in two hours' time, he was awaiting impatiently—even in this land and day of *mañana y mañana*—the lingering of his womenfolk over the array of silks, laces and ribbons spread out on a plank, supported by a barrel and a box.

He was watching the approach of the ship's boat, when his daughter, "la Señorita Ysabel," came running to him. Holding up the shimmering folds of a sky-blue silk against skin that was like a creamy rose petal in its fresh richness, she cried:

"I must have this one, also, *mi padre!* This is the most beautiful of them all!"

"Chut, chut, child!" her father spoke reprovingly with a gesture of denial. "Dost think I am a Pico? Already thou hast silks enough for two daughters! No; I will not have such extravagance—not this one." And he turned away with a determination that left her breathless with astonishment—so seldom had her lightest fancy been denied.

With a puzzled face the girl returned to her mother's side. Señora Lopez sat upon a tobacco keg, fanning herself so vigorously with a great black satin fan that her lace rebosa had slipped from her smooth braids. The California sun was hot here on the unsheltered deck, although it was but February; and a twenty-mile ride, with the excitement of choosing bridal finery as well as the regular annual shopping list, had told on *la señora's* little-used powers of endurance. Before she could find breath or words to answer her daughter's questioning glance, Don Bernardo Ruiz, gallant in velvet trousers, silken sash and peaked sombrero, stepped forward.

"Permit me, señorita," he bent with utmost respect before his betrothed. "I will add this silk to my chest—it shall be a part of thy wedding *doñas*—is it well?"

"I do not know——" the girl murmured, turning again to her mother, who at this second appeal struggled to her feet and spoke with a dignity becoming to Mercedes Guadalupe y Rios de Lopez:

"Since Señor Ruiz is so generous, the blue silk may well be a part of thy *doñas.*"

*"Gracias, señora, gracias,"* and he bent over her hand. Then the silk was added to the heap of his purchases.

Señor Lopez, in the meantime, had been giving directions to his mayor-domo, a swarthy, heavy-bodied Mexican. The man sought out the mate, and with many repetitions and gesticulations, made him understand that *el patron* would now go ashore, and that the goods were to be delivered to himself to be loaded on the waiting carretas. The mate, in turn, transmitted this information to the purser.

"But," Salem gasped, following his customer toward the ship's side, "I must have a note! How do I know who you are? How do I know you will pay?"

Don José turned about with a patiently inquiring glance. He had been keenly disappointed at not finding the ship's owner, Don Alfredo Robinson, dearly beloved of all Californians, on board. This raw, suspicious-eyed Yankee youth had irritated him almost beyond bearing; although Salem—of the blissfully ignorant who never suspect their own shortcomings—had not guessed that fact.

Again the mate was called upon and, having a grudge himself against the new purser, he interpreted with a grin.

"He desires my name? A paper?" Señor Lopez drew up his massive frame, which would have been bulky but for the sinewy litheness of the saddle-bred, and threw out his hands in a gesture of large contempt. "I am José Maria Lopez, of Los Feliz Rancho. I am a true Californian—my word is my bond! No one has ever before asked me for a paper," he went on hotly.

"But you—you are a Yankee," he added, looking at Salem almost pityingly. "Here!" he jerked a curling hair from his grizzled beard and held it out.

"Here! Show this to Don Alfredo and tell him it is a hair from the beard of José Maria Lopez, and it is my promise to pay—whatever is due."

With a sweeping bow before the red-faced, wide-eyed purser, he dropped the hair upon the open page of the account book on a barrel near and turned away. But as he stepped over the ship's edge, he looked back to say:

"That is the bond also for my friend, Don Bernardo Ruiz, here," and he indicated the young man. Then he stepped lightly into the boat, where his party awaited him, leaving Salem Peabody staring dumbly at the short, crisp, black hair lying on his book.

"These Yankees must be fools!" Señor Lopez was grumbling, as the little boat bumped over waves and sandbars. "Do they think a paper will make a man honest? Do they suppose that a scrap of writing means more than a man's word?"

"It is their custom—they buy and sell with bits of paper, I am told," remarked Don Bernardo.

"It is no way for honest people," declared the Californian, still aggrieved," and never before has any man asked paper or promise of me!"

At the landing, Indian servants awaited the party with their horses. Don José passed his hand caressingly over the silken skin of his favorite, El Negro, black and glossy as the jet earrings in his wife's ears, before he leaped lightly to the silver-bedecked saddle. In all California, maintained Don José, there was no equal to El Negro in speed, in willing service, in knowingness. It was this horse which had won a stake of $20,000 in the greatest horse race ever run off on California soil; and his master had afterward refused a rancho of five thousand square leagues for him.

It was not to be expected that the great racer should be held to the pace suited to *la señora,* and the women were therefore consigned to the care of the servants and Don Pedro, an appendage of the Lopez hacienda who sometimes did duty as an escort; while Don Bernardo courted favor with his future father-in-law by galloping in his wake.

As they rode, Señor Lopez, with a wonder and a hurt pride almost childlike in its insistence, referred again and again to the purser's impudent request. "We are better without *los Americanos* and their sharp ways," he declared. "Only Don Alfredo, Don Julian, and a few others who are almost 'sons of the country,' are honest men."

The next day when the loaded carretas reached Los Feliz, the mayor-domo placed in his *patron's* hand a neatly written and carefully tabulated statement, done in Salem Peabody's best style and set off with carefully disposed flourishes. No one on Los Feliz Rancho could read this document; but Don José made out the footing—$1278.00, and as to the rest—that did not concern him, he tossed the paper aside.

And still Señor Lopez was not entirely without business acumen. The next time Bernardo Ruiz visited the rancho his host asked him the amount of his account, saying jocularly:

"If I stand good for your debt with that Yankee, I must know what it is."

Don Bernardo laughed; and he answered with an air that would have been pompous to an Anglo-Saxon, but which struck the Californian as worthy of the son of his father, Castilian by birth:

"I pay my own debts, Señor! And this one—it is but five hundred and seventy *pesos*—I had expected it would be more."

Three months later news trickled down the coast from Monterey that the schooner, Mary Jane, had never reached that port. After leaving Santa Barbara she had been blown out of her course. It was feared that she and all on board were lost. Señor Lopez was sincerely grieved at the word.

"It will mean a heavy loss to Don Alfredo, and he is a good man—almost like our own," he said. "And so the young Yankee will make no more voyages and his books are lost, too," he shook his head; but his sigh lacked genuineness.

At once he set aside certain stores of tallow and bundles of hides, the legal tender of the country, with which to pay his reckoning when the ship-master should appear to receive it. But nearly a year passed and Alfred Robinson did not come south. Rumor said that he had sailed for Boston by way of China, without making any attempt to collect claims of which he had no record. In his concern at these tidings, Señor Lopez actually regretted the death of Salem Peabody; yet he felt that his old friend had fallen short.

"Don Alfredo surely knew," he avowed, "that no true Californian would deny or conceal a just debt. He is foolish—as an American—to go off like that."

Even in the uneventful lives of a people who had few interests outside the regular routine of ranch life and the occasional uprisings or revolutions that marked their political changes, or the festivals of the church and of family celebrations, the unexpected sometimes transpires. One afternoon as Don José peacefully smoked a cigarette upon his *galeria,* Ysabel, his little daughter, came tripping to his side and after a most dutiful courtesy, respectfully awaited his permission to speak. And when he asked with an indulgent, paternal smile, "What wish you, little one?" she replied sweetly:

"I only wished to tell you that I shall not marry Don Bernardo Ruiz."

In his surprise, Don José took hold of the lighted end of his cigarette and burned his fingers. When he had recovered his dignity, he spoke sternly:

"What nonsense is this? I like not such folly in a young girl — this wedding has been too long delayed for foolishness—"

"It is no folly," Ysabel replied with flashing eyes. "Bernardo Ruiz will never be my husband."

"For what reason?" her father demanded.

"Because he makes love to other girls—he was betrothed to Anita Venezuela before he asked my hand—"

"Well, well, a young man sometimes makes mistakes—" Señor Lopez apologized for his sex.

"And besides," Ysabel continued, "he smokes and talks horses always with you—one would think it was your hand he sought—"

When every other argument had been exhausted, the father fell back on what was to him the most convincing of all facts:

"You have given him your promise—I have given him my word—"

"What care I for words?" she flashed. "I do not care for Bernardo Ruiz, and he—he only cares for Los Feliz Rancho!"

When, knowing herself victorious, she retired from the field, she added, "I only regret that blue silk dress he bought on Don Alfredo's Sarah Jane! I did want that silk—"

The California father was, according to the usage of the country, indisputably the head of his own household, with full authority to choose his own sons-in-law; yet within four months after Ysabel's announcement, Señor José Maria Lopez found himself in possession of a son-in-law in whose selection he had had no voice. And, to his bitter indignation, Bernardo Ruiz accepted the changed situation with the utmost philosophy and soon afterward married his cousin, Dolores Arguello, of the Santa Barbara district, and went to live on her father's rancho.

Such wilfulness and fickleness was not possible among *gente de razon* in his day, Don José mourned to his *compadres,* as they sat under the sheltering verandas of *la ciudad de Los Angeles* and drank the wine of the country.

"Our young people of today are not worthy of their forebears—they do not know the meaning of the word honor as we were taught it," was his plaint.

In those days the California year was fat or lean, as the rain fell. The second year after the unlucky trip of the Sarah Jane, was counted as a "dry" season; crops were short and cattle light of weight. From January to January of the third year barely rain enough fell to bring out a showing of green. Herds and flocks were driven from mesas and plains to valleys and high mountain cañons; from inland to coast, from south to north and turn about, in search of better feed—there was no good pasture. Wheat fields, gardens and bean patches were barren, except in the cienagas, or marshy places.

The year that followed was the record breaker—the dryest year within the memory of the oldest Californian — never since equaled. Scarcely was the dust laid by the meager rains. There were no crops. Streams showed no trace of water and springs went dry. The *rancheros* were compelled to dig new water holes and drive stock far to save from thirst—it was useless to seek new pastures anywhere—only bare, burned earth was to be found. Cattle starved, or were slaughtered for their hides, since there was no tallow on their bones.

These were hard years, indeed, on Rancho Los Feliz. There was not only the shortage of the drouth to meet. Ysabel's husband was a gambler and a spendthrift and more than once the resources of his father-in-law were drained to meet debts of "honor" as he considered them. The stores reserved for Don Alfredo's account had long since been drawn upon; the last hide and *arroba* of tallow had been paid out. The herds were so depleted by the drouth that only the confidence of the Boston traders in the integrity of the Californians supplied Don José, and many another ranchero, with the necessities of life.

It was February, the month when rains should have been most plentiful, yet the sky was mockingly cloudless and the blazing sun was singeing the dust of green brought out on the hills by the miserly showers. Señor Lopez, after a hard morning in the saddle, inspecting the bony creatures that were devouring shadowy grass in a vain effort to fill empty stomachs, sank into his big cowhide chair in the shadiest corner of the patio. He was dozing when he was aroused by the welcoming chorus of the dogs. For once his abounding hospitality failed and he did not meet his guest at the front step. His *compadre,* Juan Abila, came to him in the *patio* and was soon unfolding his budget of news.

Presently he remarked: "I have just come from San Pedro—a new trading vessel cast anchor yesterday—the Sarah Jane again, and Don Alfredo is her master—"

"Don Alfredo Robinson?" Don José sat up with a start. "Is it possible? I never thought he would come to this coast again—"

He scarcely heard the rest of Señor Abila's recital. An unexpected blow had fallen. His debt to Don Alfredo must be paid now—it was long past due. He had promised to pay—had given his word—no idle word, be the weather fair or foul. But how was this obligation to be met after all the disasters of these fatal dry years?

For almost the first time in his life Don José passed a restless night. In the morning he summoned his faithful Jacinto and together they visited the herds and flocks that remained. Both agreed that these were already reduced to the danger point—they could not be drawn on for the sum due the ship owner without bringing complete ruin. Señor Lopez had never before faced a serious financial problem. Los Feliz Rancho, while not so extensive as many another, was well watered and rich in pasturage. And beside there was La Tijera, his wife's heritage, also well stocked, in ordinary times. There were no banks in the country in which to deposit a surplus; in fact, there was little money in circulation. For the most part each rancho supplied its own necessities, while their owners traded hides and tallow with the vessels for the luxuries and paid their racing and gambling debts with livestock or land.

Since the accustomed barter was now out of the question, Don José fell to reviewing his possessions for some other possible exchange. The list was brief; in truth, it began—and ended—with *El Negro,* as he reluctantly acknowledged. The horse was no longer a sure stake-winner—his owner had lost heavily in backing his favorite during the past few years. But he was still easily the finest saddle horse in all California and well worth the amount of the debt.

Señor José Maria Lopez was an exemplary father and husband, yet he knew within his own soul that he could spare wife or daughter with less sense of personal loss than he could give up his *El Negro.* Deepest gloom was upon the old Californian when he mounted the black and accompanied by Jacinto, leading an extra mount, started toward the harbor. The horse chafed a little under his master's restraining hand, for in his grief at the coming separation, Don José could not hasten forward at his usual rattling pace.

His old friend, Robinson, greeted him with the hearty clasp of a sea dog and a hailing shout. As he mixed the toddy which had made him famous up and down the coast, he cried:

"Its like old times to sell José Maria Lopez a cargo of stuff!"

"But, *amigo,*" Don José corrected, "I come not to buy today—I come to pay my debts."

"Your debts?" the American looked at him in surprise. "I didn't know you owed me anything."

"No?" the old man rose to his feet. "But I know, señor. When the Sarah Jane was in port last time, my account was 1278 *pesos.* I have no hides or tallow now—you know how these accursed dry seasons have made havoc—and no cattle to spare. But I have brought El Negro. He is yours. And," he continued, "I also stood good that day for the account of Bernardo Ruiz. He is—I know not where—he will never pay the debt, it is certain. But perhaps El Negro will cover that amount, too—"

"But, Don José, you owe me nothing! That debt was outlawed," the ship-master broke in. "I never expected to collect anything on those accounts for that trip—I took the insurance instead—"

"Did you think that Californians would forget a debt because it was not written on paper?" sternly demanded Señor Lopez. "That is not our way; at least, it is not the way of any true son of the country. No, Señor Robinson," and the "son of his country" took off his sombrero and lifted his hand with a graceful sweep, "my word is my bond—and yonder is its fulfillment!" He pointed to the shore where El Negro could be seen, his glossy skin shining in the sun, while he pawed impatiently at the waiting. "I turn over to you my El Negro—the finest horse in California. He will satisfy my debt in full with—how you call it?—interest—is it not so?" And he sat down with a sigh of relief that his word was made good.

With painstaking care Alfred Robinson explained the nature of insurance and the indemnification for his loss of the old Sarah Jane; but Señor José Maria Lopez remained firm.

"I bought the goods and I promised to pay for them," he insisted, "and my word is good—it matters not about your American ways — my word is good!"

---

The Boston traders who first visited the Pacific Coast and traded with the Californians from 1829 on, universally testify to the honor of the residents of the country. Robinson states that sometimes the missions and rancheros were owing two or three hundred thousand dollars, with no sign of security, yet it was all paid.

The story of the delivery of the hair from his beard as security for his debt, is told by Bancroft concerning Don Augustin Machado, of La Ballona Rancho, between Los Angeles and Venice, part of the town of Venice being located on this rancho.

# Siege of La Cajetin

AFTER a sudden raid into Chihuahua, Baltasar's band of Yaqui Indians was followed back to its mountain retreats by a volunteer troop. For three weeks the Indians turned and twisted, making dashing raids and picking off their pursuers from unsuspected shelters; but the Chihuahuan captain knew the Sierra Madres, too. He cut Baltasar off on this side and headed him off on that, and at last forced him into La Cajetin Cañon, its only entrance a narrow gorge.

"We have the coyotes in a trap — they cannot escape," the *comandante* cheerfully assured his men.

But of what use is a trap, if you cannot put your finger on your prey? The Yaquis would never surrender—there was water and a band of sheep in the cañon. Twice the Mexicans tried to force an entry and then the *peons* flatly declined again to enter the "passage of death." Gonzales could do nothing but post his guards and wait—for fate to take a hand.

Within the trap old Baltasar set his watch, as well, and if a Mexican sentry raised his head above the sky-line—there was one less of the besieging force. But the old chief knew, as he came down through the valley on the fifth day of the siege, that his men had less than two rounds of ammunition apiece. He stood under a stunted oak and let his keen glance run carelessly from man to man, as they lounged about him. At last he motioned to one, a young fellow who lay apart from the rest, his wide sombrero drawn low over his alertly watchful eye.

"We are twenty-eight men, my son," Baltasar said when they had drawn to one side, "and we have thirty-seven cartridges."

Isadore did not speak and the old man went on, "We may be able to drive the dogs back once more, but again—" he shook his head. "And I sent Pablo to Muni—Muni will come to us—if the devils have not shut him in somewhere; and then *los Mejicanos* cannot turn this way or that"—he smiled grimly—"they will be forced in here with us, and if we have not cartridges—" throwing his hands apart, he swept them outward. "Some man must go there to Don Juan across the border, and bring back ammunition."

"What does one?" asked Isadore.

"There!" Baltasar turned to the rock of wall which rose two hundred feet sheer at the upper end of the valley. "No guard is there. At the top it is but a shelf and then another cañon, and through it—the trail to the north."

The chief fixed a piercing look upon his companion. Isadore had left the Yaqui country in his boyhood; he was an American citizen now—he had married a wife who was as much Mexican as Yaqui—more in truth. Baltasar was remembering these things—but he was a judge of men.

"Wilt thou go, and return quickly, Isadore?"

The young man straightened his shoulders. A new light came into his face. "I must search out the way up that wall," he said and stepped lightly out of the hollow.

With a spring the old man caught his sleeve and dragged him back "Fool!" he groaned as a bullet ticked a stone at their feet, "to fling thy life away at this moment! *Aqui!*" And he led the way under the shelter of the dry-creek bank until they reached a huge boulder. Under its shadow they crouched and carefully inspected the wall, Baltasar pointing out that it was rotten stone, showing unsuspected cracks and ledges, and then describing minutely the cañon beyond, and the trail; for Isadore was a stranger to the paths of his fathers.

Isadore listened attentively; but his eyes were sparkling, his grave face lighted with hidden fire. Luisa, the bride of a month, was there at Don Juan. Long miles and unknown dangers lay between them; yet this would give him a chance to see her.

He had been a vaquero on the Short Stop Ranch for ten years now, and he had loved Luisa ever since—a little wild thing, she had played about him while he worked, and told to him alone her thoughts and fancies. She had come back from the convent school a quiet, self-possessed young woman, still with little to say to those about her, and her old friend had felt that she was a fit wife for the "boss" himself. He had never thought of aspiring to her hand for his own, until she had come to him and told him that she chose to be the wife of an Indian rather than the plaything of a white man. Then they had gone to the priest.

One month of home and happiness was given to them before the call for all Yaquis to come to the aid of their tribe in resisting Mexican oppression had reached Isadore. Luisa had protested strongly.

"These people—they drove you out; from them you had only hunger and blows. Why should you leave me to fight their fight? They are naught to us," she said, with truth.

And his employer explained in vain that Isadore owed no further allegiance to his tribe, and swore hotly at him as a "hopeless fool" — to translate mildly his words.

But Isadore answered to everything: "It is my country—they are my people—I must go."

For five months now he had followed Baltasar, taking unflinchingly his part in the guerilla warfare; but his heart was not in it. His thoughts were all of the work he had left, of his home and of Luisa. He had heard no word of her since he left her. But now he might see and know that all was well with her. This thought pulsed through him as he scanned the wall, fixing every detail, every possibility, in his mind.

The ascent must be made in the brief hour between sunset and moonrise. At dusk Isadore began to climb, cautiously feeling his way with hand and foot, testing every step, swinging from ledge to crevice and niche with cat-like nimbleness. Once a foothold crumbled and he saved himself from dashing below only by a clutch that left his fingers torn and bleeding. Sometimes he must cut his steps in the rock and at last he reached a granite face on which even the knife could get no hold. He wasted precious moments in groping over it, and then was obliged to retrace his way to a ledge along which he could creep, upward and outward. A stone rattled down, and he heard footsteps above; he flattened himself against the wall and waited till the steps retreated.

The moon swung clear of Old Woman Peak as he dragged himself upon the top and lay panting and nerveless. But he must not stop in that pitiless light and, lying flat, he worked himself across the ledge and began to explore the opposite edge for the point where he could most easily descend. Again he heard the pace of the sentry and held his breath while he awaited what should come. But the man had no mind to make himself a target for Yaqui bullets on that bare ledge, and turned back before he reached it.

After a little search at the foot of the new cañon, Isadore found the trail described by Baltasar and, guided more by instinct than by sight, he followed steadily its obscure but certain leading. Absorbed as he was in keeping this path that led over rocks and through gulches, lost itself in brush and leaped up and down mountainsides, he was conscious all the time that Baltasar had chosen him, had trusted him above all the rest, and he must not fail Baltasar. And always he heard Luisa's cry of joy—that alone would be worth all the toil and danger.

When the moon waned, he slept; but at daybreak he was on foot again. The day was well on before he left the mountains. A wide plain, loosely covered with greasewood, cactus and yuccas, and broken by many dry water courses, stretched away to the northward. There was no water, no shade, and the August sun scorched the very air; but the Indian trotted warily on, keeping to the scant shelter and the low ground and once lying behind the sparse screen of a mesquite bush, while a band of the Mexican patrol swept by in the distance.

The moon's magic was turning the barren, dusty plains into cool fields of restful beauty as he at last approached the settlement. Instinctively he turned at first to the house where he had left Luisa in the care of a country-woman, but time pressed; reluctantly he passed by and went on to a long, low *adobe* which stood apart from the other houses. He gave a signal knock and in a moment was standing within, while an old man, a boy, and three or four women gathered about, questioning, exclaiming, gesturing. They hushed as he spoke:

"Baltasar's band went down into Gonsalez' country. He followed us back; he had many men, we few; he drove us back and back into La Cajetin. I have come for cartridges. They have tried twice to enter and twice borne back their dead. But if they strike again, or if Muni's band comes to aid us, and we have not ammunition—it is the end." Then, turning to the boy, he said, "Go quickly, Juan, and fetch Luisa—tell her one wishes to see her, but do not speak my name—"

A pot of steaming coffee had been placed upon the table. He swallowed two cups of the liquid before he noted the silence in the room and that Juan remained still. "Why stand you there?" he demanded angrily, "I have haste to make and I must see my wife."

The old man had dragged a heavy box from underneath a bed and was taking from it little green boxes of cartridges. He straightened up now and, coming around the table, laid his hand on Isadore's arm.

"You cannot see your wife," he said, using the harsh gutturals of their native tongue.

"Is she dead?" Isadore cried, springing up.

"No—but she has the pest—smallpox—she will die tomorrow, old Téofila says."

"Why did you not speak then," cried the husband passionately. "Think you I fear the pest? Where is she?" He turned toward the door, but the old man stepped in front of him.

"That you must not do," he cried. "You know the foolishness of the Americans! They watch day and night—no one may enter or leave there. And you, if they see you—a Yaqui rebel, they will give you over to the Mexicans."

"*Que caramba!* The devil himself shall not keep me from my Luisa! Let me pass—"

But the old man, placing his back against the door, answered, "Think, *hombre!* What of thy seven and twenty brothers up there? Wilt leave them to die?"

Isadore hesitated. Then he caught the whisper of one woman to another—"She calls always for him, Téofila said."

"What are the men to me?" he broke out roughly, "they are nothing—but she—she is my wife. Send some other man back to La Cajetin. Stand aside!"

Without moving old Chepé raised his hand and spoke solemnly: "There is no other man left to go. Tebiate is dead with the pest. Felipe is shut in—yonder. Juan here is but a boy and I"—his voice broke into a wail—"God help us—I am very old!"

Unheeding, Isadore shoved the old man aside and sprang through the door. Outside the freshness of the sparkling air cooled his brain. The sight of the distant mountains brought back the vision of Baltasar and the trapped men whose lives depended upon him. He paused within a shadow and watched the guard turn at the corner of the house where Luisa lay, and walk with leisurely step down the row of black adobe huts. The gleam of his gun-barrel maddened the Indian. What right had that man to stand between him and his dying wife? to prevent him from looking into her eyes, hearing her voice?

He drew out his revolver. It would be easy enough to send a bullet there just under the right shoulder, and then he might take Luisa in his arms, kiss her farewell, and make his escape. His people would help him. His hands shook as he turned the weapon. But with American citizenship he had adopted the cowboy code—he could not shoot a man in the back! Beside, the man was but carrying out orders, as he himself was doing.

A faint gleam of light from the room where he knew his wife must be attracted him — fascinated him. If he could look into her window, catch one last glimpse of her face, hear her voice calling his name, then he might be able to go back to Baltasar. He measured the distance with his eye; he could easily reach the window while the watchman's back was turned, and surely the man would not shoot him for just looking into the window! He could outrun any pursuer; yet an alarm would mean delay—perhaps a failure of his mission. With an oath he admitted that the risk was too great. He must go back without seeing Luisa—he should never see her again. He hid his face in his hands with a groan of actual physical suffering. Then, with a long look at the little light, he turned away.

The women—the wives and sisters of Chepé's two sons, who were with Baltasar—were huddled about the door, watching the figure in the shadow. They greeted his return with tears and with whispered words of joy—but he pushed past them to Chepé, who was squatted on the floor in front of the black fireplace, his head between his knees. Shaking his shoulder, Isadore said:

"Make ready quickly and send Juan for your best horse. Fifty miles must lie behind me before the sun rises."

Soon, with eyes turning again and again toward the feeble little light from that window, he was stealing away through the shadows. Outside the village Juan met him with the horse. There was little danger of interruption now on the road that stretched away, a white thread, through the dark mesa, and he put the pony to a steady gallop. He might think now. Just as he started one of the women had spoken:

"The white doctor does great things sometimes—and it is the white doctor gives the medicine to Luisa. She may not die, perhaps. Old Téofila — *quien sabe?* old Téofila may not speak true."

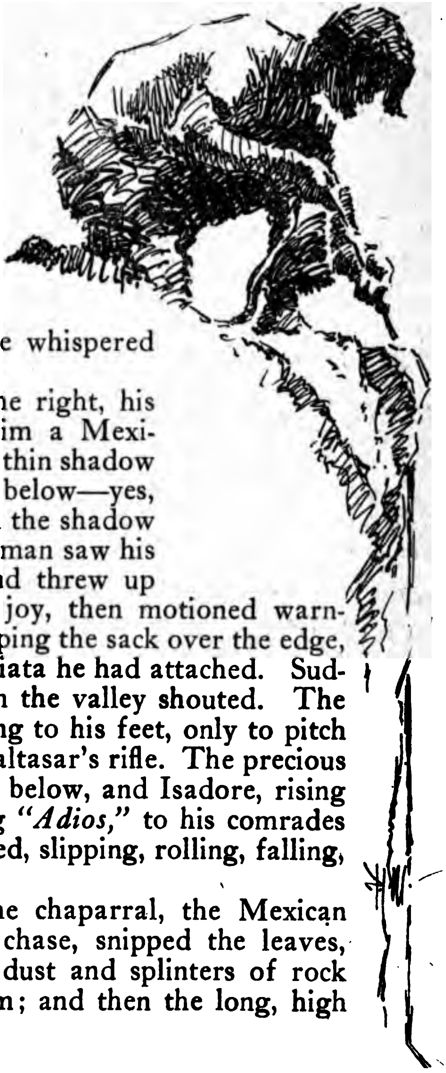
"Téofila knows well the signs of death," Isadore had answered in bitterness. But he snatched at the hope. It was true that the American doctor had done miracles—he had seen it. And Téofila might be mistaken—at least she might mistake the time. Luisa might live two—three—days—she might not die at all. "I will see her again," he swore to himself. "I must carry these accursed cartridges to Baltasar — but I will return at once. Before the moon goes down another day, I will be with Luisa, and then she may not die. We will go back to the rancho—to our own little house—and be happy again. Yes," he repeated, "they may fight if it pleases them; but I will take Luisa and go back to my cattle. That is best."

He burned with impatience when he thought of the distance ahead of him. He grew reckless and urged his horse on with no thought of danger, until the steady beat of hoofs, muffled by the dust, startled him. There was no hiding place here on the open plain. He cursed his own carelessness and used his Spanish bit and his spurs wickedly; if he could reach the wash ahead, with its broken banks, he might escape unnoticed. But his half-fed pony was no match for the long stride of the horses behind. They gained, and presently he heard an order to halt. A moment later a bullet zipped past his horse's flank. He rode at full speed down a steep bank and wheeled at right angles into a gulch so narrow that his knees scraped the sides. It was a desperate chance. But the patrolmen, wrapped in a cloud of their own dust, swept by and by the time they had agreed as to their blunder, Isadore was far out of range.

He was able to push his sturdy, sure-footed little beast over some miles of the mountain trail. He staked the pony, took a little food and went on, without waiting for sleep or for daybreak. The cartridge belt about his waist twisted and chafed with every movement; the sack of ammunition grew more leaden at every step of the endless, upward climb. His eyes were weighted with sleep and his feet clumsy with weariness; yet he paused only to pant for breath after some heavy pull. He was driven relentlessly on by the thought of the men in peril there ahead, and of Luisa dying in San Juan, without him.

"No!" he repeated many times, "she will not die — the good God will not permit that — before I come."

It was high noon when he reached the end of the trail. The thin, clear air pulsated with heat and with silence. He listened; but no sound of living



thing came to him and he shouldered the sack for the last climb with a dull sense of being too late, after all.—He was on top of the ridge once more and looking eagerly down into La Cajetin. Ah! there under the tree were the men, just as he had left them, apparently. All was well then and he whispered a prayer of thanks.

A hundred yards to the right, his reconnoissance showed him a Mexican guard, sleeping in the thin shadow of a rock. Down there below—yes, it was Baltasar himself in the shadow of the boulder. The old man saw his cautiously lifted head and threw up his hands in welcoming joy, then motioned warningly. But Isadore, dropping the sack over the edge, began to lower it by the riata he had attached. Suddenly a sentinel far down the valley shouted. The sleeping guardsman sprang to his feet, only to pitch forward at a puff from Baltasar's rifle. The precious sack dropped to the sand below, and Isadore, rising to his feet, sent a ringing *"Adios,"* to his comrades and, turning about, plunged, slipping, rolling, falling, back down the cañon.

As he ran through the chaparral, the Mexican soldiers who had given chase, snipped the leaves, scattered little whiffs of dust and splinters of rock from the bank beside him; and then the long, high cry of Yaqui warriors mingled with the echoes of fast-repeated shots. The Mexicans turned back and Isadore went on, knowing that his work had been well done—Muni had come to the rescue.

Nothing but the dogged endurance of generations inured to physical hardship could have kept him in the now familiar trail, as he staggered on, feeling nothing, seeing nothing, except the vision of his Luisa calling for him — dying without him. When he reached the spring where he had left the horse, he drank long and deep, plunging his throbbing head again and again into the little pool. With his hands dabbling in the water, his heavy eyelids dropped and in an instant the bliss of sleep was upon him; but as he floated into forgetfulness, he seemed to hear a low, sweet voice calling his name.

He started up, struggled to his feet and blindly saddled the pony. Then the faithful beast stumbled on, unguided, down the mountainside.

The soothing light of the moon again rested on the ugly little Arizona town, when Isadore rode into San Juan and directly to the little adobe. In front of the hut, he dropped from the horse to his knees.

The door and windows stood wide open and the long bars of silver illuminated the darkest corners with their mocking light.

The room was bare and empty.

# For Lack of a Peachblow Silk

"NO. I will not marry Antonio—now or ever! *He is mucho feo!*"

*"Feo?"* Señor Vicente Cota looked at his niece with eyes of pitying contempt. "Thou little foolish——" Words failed him and he trailed off into muttered *carmabas.*

"Yes," Señorita Trinidad Cota repeated emphatically, "Antonio Garro has little pig eyes—and large horse teeth—I should be afraid he might eat me with those teeth!"

Señor Cota gathered himself up and spoke in his most impressive manner. "Antonio Garro—he has also much land and many cattle and horses—and his father has more—it will be many a day before a better man asks thy hand, Señorita Trinidad!"

"Ah, well," the girl laughed lightly, "I have cattle and horses and acres of my own—have I not? I do not eat of other's bread, in the meantime."

It was a bold speech to make to Don Vicente Cota, the head of the proudest family in all the south. Even Trinidad, in her girlish daring, did not linger for its effect. She bent low before her uncle, and with her head thrown as high as Don Vicente could himself achieve in his haughtiest moments, she walked away, leaving her uncle to pour out Spanish oaths into the soft midday air.

That same afternoon a young Indian loped into the Cota yard and was conducted to the *galeria,* where the family had gathered after the siesta. With

824401

gravity and ceremony he delivered by word of mouth, a message to Señor Cota that made *la señorita* bound from her chair and swing her arms in a gay gesture of delight.

"It is at last Valeria de Osa's *festa de boda.*" How we shall dance and sing and play! All the country will be there—and I—I must have some new gowns! Is there no ship due at San Pedro, *tio?*"

"I know of none," Don Vicente answered, as he swung into the saddle of his waiting horse, to go forth for the afternoon's inspection. Trinidad's bright face clouded.

"There is your white silk and your blue satin, child," suggested Señora Cota, a plump, unwrinkled matron, who passed her days in a calm, unending setting of dainty stitches in dainty fabrics.

"And they are well enough," put in Paciencia—Trinidad's nurse and maid and *dueña,* who had petted and scolded and spoiled the child from the day of her birth.

"Poh!" cried Trinidad with scorn, "that stupid, Juan Bonita, spilled wine all down the front of the white silk, and you well know, Paciencia, that wine stains will not come out. And for the satin, for all thy fine stitches, Tia Maria, it shows where Antonio Garro—the beast—put his spur through it! No; I must have at least one new gown for the wedding feast or I cannot go at all."

"Chut!" her aunt laughed good-naturedly, "as if thou couldst stay away from a wedding and a dance!"

But Trinidad was thinking so hard that little lines cut across her smooth brow. "I have it!" she cried presently, dancing swiftly about the two women. "I have it! You know that beautiful peachblow silk that Ysidora Ybarra bought the day I found my blue satin? And then her father died and she must wear black. She has that silk still, and she will let me have it for Valeria's *festa*. She is so good—Ysidora."

"But how can you get that silk here, child? It is far to the Ybarra's and we seldom go that way," her aunt objected.

I will send a messenger; one of *los hombres* shall go! I will ask my uncle now before he is off," and the girl caught up her mantilla.

"Nay, nay, Trinidad, not now—" her aunt interposed. "The sheep-shearing goes not well this time; and the men are all at work—it is a busy time—the spring."

"Yes," echoed old Paciencia, "wait, little one of my eyes. There is time—it is yet three weeks."

"But that is not long," Trinidad cried impatiently. "Still, I will wait until after supper tonight, when *el tio* smokes and rests. Then I will beg of him old Tomás and horses, and you and I will go for the peachblow silk, Paciencia—that will be best. Yes, after supper, he will hear me, is it not so?"

And the old woman looked at the swaying figure, the dimpling face and sparkling eyes and, chuckling in her throat, said:

"He is but a man——"

But after supper, when the Don seated himself upon the veranda, his mayor-domo, the head sheepherder and the captain of the shearing band all had words to say to the master, and it was late before his impatient niece found chance for speech.

He listened to her request with a darkening brow. "It is not alone that I cannot well spare a man, or horses, just now at the shearing time," he said, "but I like not to ask favors of the Ybarras; we are not friends."

"Ysidora and I are friends," she began impetuously. "We care naught for your quarrel over brands. And if I have not that silk, I cannot go to Valeria's wedding. You would not have *la casa de Cota* disgraced by a shabby gown—you know that," she appealed with the inconsistency of the child she was.

Don Vicente smiled, but he shook his head. "You know not of what you speak," he answered shortly. "You must get your silks of some one else—not from the Ybarras."

"Then I may not ask Ysidora Ybarra to sell me that peachblow silk?" the girl demanded.

"That is it. I have said——"

The girl went back to the end of the *galeria,* where her aunt and Paciencia awaited her. Her face was pale, her eyes gleaming in the moonlight.

"My uncle says that I may not buy the silk of Ysidora because of the quarrel over brands. I cannot go to Valeria's wedding feast and be her bridesmaid. And," she went on furiously, "I shall marry the first man that asks my hand! I will no longer submit to such tyranny as this."

Then she fell to weeping tempestuously, while two loving slaves to her own innocent tyranny caressed and pitied and offered new plans and hopes for her consolation. But Trinidad went sobbing to bed, and rose next morning with a face so black and unhappy, that Paciencia sought out Don Vicente and upbraided him sharply for crossing her idol. Señor Cota listened angrily enough—but he listened; for the old woman had served his mother and his sister—both now dead—long and faithfully. But he was unmoved. The Ybarras had set their brand, so he believed, upon some of his calves at the last *rodeo.* There had been hot words and neither he nor any of his family could accept—must less ask—favors of the Ybarras until the wrong was righted.

Señorita Trinidad, with a firmness that was a transmission from the Cota's, sent word to her friend that she must choose another bridesmaid, and a chilly quiet fell upon *la casa de Cota,* such as it had not known since the orphaned niece had come to live under its shelter. So great was the change in the merry-hearted girl that even *la señora* ventured a feeble protest with her husband. He swore lustily at the pack of foolish women; but without mentioning the fact, he went himself to Los Angeles and asked right and left for silks—which were not to be had, for it was now nearly a year since a Yankee trader had put into port.

The house of Cota might not ignore a wedding feast of the De Osa's. On the appointed day Don Vicente and his wife, in her stiffest brocade, rode away to the wedding. But Señorita Trinidad, the favorite toast of *los caballeros* from San Diego to Santa Barbara, stayed at home—for lack of the peachblow silk—and wept floods of tears, and made the life of her old nurse a trial.

Only a month later a vessel arrived, and when the word had been passed around, Trinidad and her aunt rode forty miles in a mule drawn carreta to the port of San Pedro. There they spent a glorious day inspecting the chests brought by the good ship "Adventure." The girl bought silks and laces and ribbons to her heart's content. And Don Vicente himself added yards of rich, creamy satin to the pile, "Lest," as he grimly remarked, "thou shouldst miss thy own wedding for lack of a gown."

Gradually something of the old chatter and laughter echoed through the house again. But Señorita Trinidad de Campo had not forgotten the tragedy of a *festa de boda* that she could not attend. And the vow that she had so rashly sworn to lingered in her mind.

One morning, after a messenger had left him, Don Vicente called his niece to his side.

"I have a letter here from Felipe Ortega," he announced gravely, "and with it is a proposal for thy hand. Let me see," he studied the paper with the screwed-up eyes of the horseman. "Don Luis Salvador it is. He is old—forty—with twelve leagues of land, and 'horses and cattle beyond count.' Felipe says he is a good and honorable man," he spelled it out laboriously.

The girl took the papers from his hand and went over them carefully, then said quietly, "You may tell Don Luis Salvador that I accept the honor he has offered me."

"What!" her uncle started up in amazement. "Accept this stranger, and refuse Antonio Garro, whom we have known always and who is a rich man and a good man! Thou art *loco*—girl, entirely crazy——"

"There cannot be two men so disagreeable as Antonio Garro," she answered with decision. "And we have Felipe's word for Señor Salvador."

"Yes," her uncle admitted, "but the man is of Santa Barbara — and a neighbor. And—it's a *manáda* to a yearling colt that Felipe is in his debt!"

"I will take Felipe's word for him," Trinidad repeated steadily. "I will marry this Don Luis. You may send him my answer," and she passed into the house, leaving Don Vicente dumb in his astonishment at the ways of a girl.

But presently his vision cleared. "I see," he laughed, "Antonio Garro goes much to the Ybarras of late. He will marry Ysidora. My lady Trinidad sees that she has lost him and fears that this Don Luis may be her last chance. Perhaps she is right—the little *fiera!*" he ended half-admiringly.

And the man of Felipe Ortega bore, on his return, a formal acceptance of the proposal of marriage.

In due time another messenger from Santa Barbara arrived, with a gracefully worded acknowledgment of the honor done Señor Salvador; also a packet containing a quaintly carved ring, set with pearls, and a string of corals that touched the floor after it was wound about Trinidad's slender throat. But that was not all. Don Luis pleaded his desire to be married upon his Saint's day, now little more than three weeks distant, and with the ceremony in the chapel of Santa Barbara Mission, since this was the custom of his family. As the time was so short and he had so many preparations to make for his bride, he begged that she and her friends might start north, and he would meet them at San Buena Ventura and escort them with fitting ceremony to Santa Barbara.

Trinidad listened to all of this with growing indignation.

"He asks too much," she cried hotly. "Does he think that I can prepare for a wedding in less than three weeks? And why should I not be married at San Gabriel, as has been the custom of *my* family? Send back his gifts. I will not marry this man."

"You should have thought of these things before you gave your word so rashly," Don Vicente reminded her sternly, and went on with authority, "Thou art a Cota. And the word of a Cota is sacred. Thou shalt not break it so lightly. Thou wilt marry this Don Luis Salvador on November 17th. Be ready."

And Señorita Trinidad, because of her blood and its traditions, and because of the vow she had so foolishly spoken, for the lack of the peachblow silk, bowed her assent, though her heart was hot with regret, and cold with foreboding.

"Thou hast two new gowns all ready and many as good as new," Aunt Maria spoke soothingly, thinking only of the wedding—as was the way of women of her time and race. "We have but to make the wedding dress and," with pride, "not one even of the De Osa girls ever wore a richer wedding robe than that! As for the rest, thy mother's chests are all packed, and there is much beside. No girl in California can go better prepared to her husband."

And indeed, when the bridal party set forth from Santa Anita valley, two laden carretas screeched and groaned beneath their burden of chests and furniture, as they followed after the saddle train.

The sun was lowering the second night, when the ocean came into view, and a group of horsemen stood out clear between them and the gilded sheen beyond. Don Vicente, with shaded eyes, announced:

"It is Felipe Ortega and thy bridegroom, child," then he spurred on ahead.

Trinidad watched eagerly the approaching party and bent forward with straining eyes, when her uncle and two of the men dismounted. As they came near she recognized her cousin Felipe and fastened her gaze upon the other man. After her first full look, she gasped:

"Mother of God, Paciencia! this one is uglier than Antonio Garro!"

And when she saw at her side the hollow cheeks, bleared eyes, and crooked nose of the lean and wiry figure that bent stiffly over her hand, she snatched that hand away and buried her face in her mantilla, sobbing: "He is *feo—mucho feo*——" and would give no other greeting.

Don Vicente called her a "little fool," and Doña Maria tremblingly apologized, while Felipe scowled. Don Luis Salvador alone remained undisturbed. "She will get used to me," he said, and turned back to his own horse.

But the next day the beautiful mare, decked with bridal trappings, which the groom had presented, bore a weeping bride toward the nuptial altar. And it is of record that the white satin wedding gown of Señora Trinidad Salvador bore always the stain of tears.

# "The Hawk and the Chickens"

"The hawk will take away the chickens!
No, it won't take them away!
Yes, the hawk'll take away the chickens—
If it does, I'll go and stay—"
(Words sung while dancing "Las Pollitas")

INNOCENTA stood under the passion vine that roofed the long portico across the front of the Aguilar *hacienda,* and swept an eager glance over the hills and mesas that stretched from the Sierra Madres across to the hazy bank that marked the ocean beyond. Here and there, dark specks, lazily moving, marked the herds that fed on the sun-parched pastures. The voices of the Indian children, playing under the willows in the *arroyo* below the house, sifted faintly through the silence. No other sign of life answered the longing impulse for action—for sensation of some sort—that glowed in the girl's face. Within the house all was dead, also. Tio Juan slept noisily on his couch in the *patio;* the servants drowsed or slumbered about him. Even Tia Maria had for once relaxed her vigilance and retired to her own room for her siesta. Perhaps it was the unwonted sense of freedom from watchful eyes that stirred in the girl.

A swirl of dust far beyond the big sycamore caught her eye. Gradually it became a white cloud which, as it approached, resolved itself into a white horse and its rider, moving rapidly in spite of the fierce noontide heat. Innocenta modestly stepped back so that she was partially screened by the vines, as the handsome face of the horseman became clear. It was Bartoloméo Smith, she knew, the despised of her aunt. But no sharp voice sounded a warning this time, and she stood still — though she knew quite well that she should have gone into the house and closed the door—tight.

The young man checked his horse and set it to side-stepping across the road, when he caught a glimpse of the pretty face revealed through the screening leaves. At the nearest point in his course, he swept the ground with his *sombrero* in a graceful salute. Little Innocenta smiled with delight and, quite involuntarily, lifted a dainty hand. Then, quick as a flash, she tucked the hand behind her, and glanced over her shoulder with a roguish smile. The smile changed to consternation, and she wheeled abruptly with her back to the road. In front of her, looming very large and very dark in her white gown, stood her aunt.

"What is this?" Señora Aguilar demanded sharply, "you—an Aguilar—smiling at that monkey-man!"

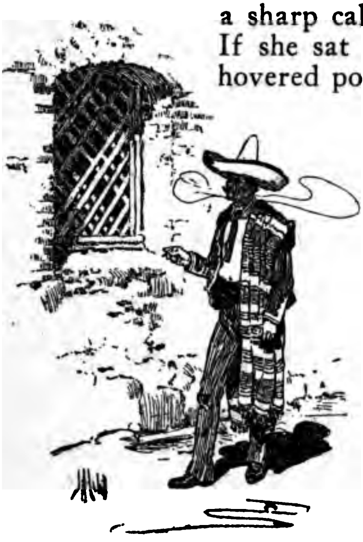
"He is the finest gentleman I have seen in the north," the girl stoutly declared.

"You dare tell me that! That dissipated *gringo* —the son of an American!"

"He is also the son of Ynez Ortega," Innocenta replied.

"The fool Ynez was to marry a foreigner! And a man called 'Smeeth'!" La Señora fairly choked in her contempt over the plebeian name. "He is a bad man, too," she continued, dropping heavily to her chair. "I tell you this, Innocenta, he is a bad man! He has stolen leagues of land and thousands of cattle from your uncle. And the son is no better than the father—and yet you smile on him! What would thy sainted mother say to see thee saluting and smiling at a strange man—and he an enemy of the family! It is well she is in her grave. And now," her cutting tone became solemn, "I warn thee. Thy uncle and I have naught to do with the house of the *gringo*. And thou must never speak with the son. See thou to it!"

But the girl had no need to heed the warning. In the weeks that followed, Tia Maria herself saw to it that her niece had no opportunity to cultivate the acquaintance of Bartoloméo Smith. When the pad of hoof beats was heard on the road, Señora Aguilar was on the alert. If Innocenta was out of her sight, a sharp call drew her within the door. If she sat upon the portico her dueña hovered portentously near. No old hen ever more vigilantly warded off the hawk, circling high above her one chick.



Sometimes the girl sat with down-dropped lids and with a tilt of the head so suggestive of defiance that Bartoloméo took heart as he passed by. Sometimes she gazed at the blue ocean rim, and horse and rider were apparently invisible, though they passed directly through her line of vision.

Then Don Bartoloméo swore. Sometimes again, in spite of the ominous frown of her aunt, she let her eyes meet his and speak with the sweet language that is as old as man and woman. Then the youth was happy.

But Tia Maria was not omnipotent, for all her watchfulness. One morning Innocenta started up, crying, "I have forgotten to light my candle for San Antonio—and it is his day! I must do it at once—" and she hastened away. In her own room, after the candle was set before the little shrine, she opened the heavy shutter on the front and peeped out.

In his daily passing to and from Los Angeles, Don Bartoloméo never failed to scan *la casa de Aguilar* with eyes that took in every detail. Today he saw the crack in the shutter and the bright eyes behind it. He bowed low and tossed a kiss—toward the shutter.

A moment afterward Innocenta picked up her sewing from the *patio* floor and sat demurely down to stitch happy thoughts of a handsome face and adoring eyes into her handkerchief — and all this quite unseen by the "hawk eyes."

A few days later as Señora Aguilar sat alone upon her *galeria,* the son of the *gringo* rode boldly into the yard. Dismounting and saluting profoundly, he spoke:

"Señora, why do you so scorn me? I have done no evil and I would gladly be friends with thee and thine—if it might be permitted."

The son of his mother could have made no greater concession. But Señora Aguilar gazed calmly over his head with no recognition of his presence, much less of his words. Mortified and angry, the youth sprang into his saddle and dashed away—swearing vows to San Pedro, San Antonio, and all the other saints he could recall at the moment, that he would yet outwit this stony lady and win his suit. After that in his passing, he caught only glimpses of a vanishing skirt or braid of hair. Innocenta no longer sat on the portico, even with a guardian on either side of her.

The arrival of a trading vessel in San Pedro harbor had been long and impatiently awaited. Señora Aguilar felt that the wardrobe her niece had brought from San Diego was quite unfitted to the needs of the heiress to the Aguilar estates. Indeed, she decided that it was not adequate for so great an occasion as a shopping expedition, when news of the anchorage of a vessel finally reached them. So with many warnings and commands, Innocenta was left in charge of old Patronilla, the Mexican housekeeper, while her uncle and aunt set forth for San Pedro.

Don Bartoloméo, on his round of his father's herds, viewed the passage of the Aguilar train. An hour later he was pacing his horse back and forth in front of the Aguilar *hacienda.* No hint of bright eyes or beckoning hand rewarded him. At last he rode around the house and drew rein before the *patio* entrance. There he saw Innocenta half-reclining upon a bench, the tears still sparkling on the round cheeks, the sobs still quivering on the soft lips.

Before he could dismount, Patronilla uttered a shrill hiss. In an instant the dogs were at his horse, nose and heels, and the animal was plunging madly to escape its tormentors. While Bartoloméo lashed off the beasts, the faithful servant, half-dragged, half-pushed the girl inside the house. But as the door slammed shut, he had one sight of an appealing face turned in his direction, and of an uplifted hand signaling a welcome, and he rode away quite satisfied with his escapade.

The gowns were ready for *La Noche Buena,* which all the world was to celebrate that year at *la casa de Dominguez.* On the way thither the day before Christmas, Señora Aguilar delivered herself of another warning:

"Because of Ynez, that *gringo* and his son will be at the *fiesta;* no Aguilar will stoop to insult the hospitality of a *compadre;* but neither will we degrade ourselves by welcoming an enemy. Thou art an Aguilar!"

*"Si,"* the child murmured, with head held high.

Her gown was of the blueness of the California sky and her blushing grace bewitched the young *caballeros* who danced with her. When he touched the little hand, Bartoloméo Smith felt new pulses throb; but her hand was cool and her eyes lifted not to the enemy of her house. It was not until the last wild strains of *El Sombrero Blanco* rang through the room and he, with hat held high above her head, bent low and kissed her hand, that her startled, betraying eyes met his ardent gaze.

That glance more fully determined the son of the American—he had inherited Yankee persistency along with the eyes and the grace of his mother. A few days later, father and son rode together into the court of the Aguilars, and the father addressed Señor Aguilar:

"We have had differences, Señor; we both believe that we are right—perhaps we are both wrong. But that is neither here nor there. My son has come to ask for the hand of your niece. He has lands and gold, as you know; he asks for naught but the girl. What say you?"

"I say," the old Spaniard answered, "that no woman of my blood marries the son of a thief and a liar!"

The American, enraged beyond self-control, leaped from his horse; but his son restrained him. Señora Aguilar appeared and drew her furious lord back from the steps. And Innocenta, who had heard it all behind her closed shutters, knelt before her little shrine and wept.

The Aguilars, including the niece of the family, considered the courtship of young Smith a closed affair now. Not so, Bartoloméo. He made plans.

The wedding of Anita Oliveras and Juan Luis Lugo, both related to the Aguilars, the Ortegas, and half the families in the country beside, was to take place in March. The marriage ceremony was to be performed in the new Church of Our Lady of the Angels, and the *fiesta de boda* was to take place in *El Palacio* on the other side of the plaza.

Bartoloméo stood near the church door on the day of the wedding when Innocenta, walking between her uncle and aunt, approached. Her eyes met his for one little instant and she flushed, then paled. After that he ignored the presence of the Aguilars as studiously as they avoided him. When the dancing began, he passed Innocenta with no sign of recognition, and her heart ached, though she laughed more gaily than ever. It was midnight when the merry crowd began to dance *Las Pollitas.* The gay voices rang out more and more recklessly, dancers moved more and more rapidly, and the onlookers crowded more closely about the revelers.

In the confusion Innocenta found herself dancing with a new partner and looked up to meet the eyes of Bartoloméo. "I love thee, sweetheart," he whispered under cover of the song.

Another change and again their hands met and their pulses throbbed together. "Wilt thou be my bride? Quick! Speak, dear one—"

She looked up and he read the answer that seals the fate of a woman in her eyes.

"Come," he went on presently, as the singers loudly challenged the "Hawks" outside, "Come, Padre Salvador awaits us in the church. Juan and Anita will go with us—it is all arranged. But a moment and thou shalt be my wife, and none can come between us! Come—"

The dancers swung and changed so rapidly that Tia Maria, whose eyes were growing heavy, caught only now and then a glimpse of her charge. She did not see Juan, the bridegroom, whisk little Innocenta out of the rear door. Glad, yet terrified, the girl yielded herself to the hand of yesterday's bride, and the four ran hastily out of the deserted yard and across the moon-lit plaza, through the shaded garden, into the side door of the church. There, in the light of a single dim candle, the good father awaited them.

"I promised thy mother to look to thy welfare, daughter," the old priest said, as he blessed the trembling bride, "I know that Bartoloméo is a good boy and a loyal son of the Holy Church. And thy aunt and Señor Aguilar are sometimes unreasonable in their prejudices, therefore—"

And the solemn words of the marriage service were pronounced.

# The Fate of His Race

CIPRIANO was a native Californian of a type—now almost extinct—that was classified according to circumstances. When a white man needed his vote, or wanted to sell him whiskey, he was of Mexican descent and a citizen of the United States; when he himself wanted to own land, or to secure justice from the courts, he was an Indian and subject to that medley of inconsistencies—the Indian service.

Cipriano's heavy shoulders stooped, his wide face was deeply pock-marked, and his movements were never unexpected. He ate and drank and slept, and drove his team where he was bidden, with a grave acquiescence to the provisions of fate; yet, he had his thoughts, his loves and his ambitions.

He thought that the days of his fathers, before the white man laid a meddling hand upon the country, were better days than any he or his children should know. He loved Isadora, his wife—she was his woman; and Isadora, his daughter, because she held out her baby hands to him—and she was his own; the only thing he had ever owned except a dog or two and a sway-backed pony. He hoped, some day, to own two horses and a cow and a bit of land; then he could live in comfort, without too much exertion.

He lived in the unfloored, unplastered adobe that his father had set up when the 'dobe of a previous generation had crumbled into mud. But Garm, *el patron,* said that the house and the land of Cipriano's inheritance belonged to him. Pretty much everything in Sycamore Cañon did belong, or was claimed, by Garm. When the wise men of the government decided that the precious *documento,* signed by a King of Spain, which the Castros had held for half a century as title to the valley, was merely a permit for grazing purposes, José Aguilar de Castro, the last male of the family, had shut himself in with a gallon of whiskey. After the funeral, Garm had bought the homestead where the old ranch house stood—all that was left of a princely estate—for $200, and the black-robed, broken-hearted women of the family had vanished.

Cipriano and half a dozen other Indian-Mexicans who lived in the huts that nestled close to earth along the creek bed, were permitted to remain. They sowed and reaped Garm's crops and chopped wood back in the mountains, on government land. Every year Garm leased his land—and that meant the whole valley—to the sheep men, and furnished them with a band of shearers. In short, his "tenants," as he called them, supplied him with cheap labor. In return, he allowed the poor devils to remain in the homes of their fathers, supplied them with scant provisions and clothing and with bad whiskey, from his store, and occasionally gave them a dollar or two in cash.

The men knew they were imposed upon. There was grumbling, and some of them drifted away into the outer world. But the rest, afraid of change, stayed on in the only spot they knew.

Only Cipriano never complained. He felt that Garm was his friend—his best friend; for, once when he had taken too much of the vile stuff *el patron* served, he had gone *loco* and stabbed a man. Garm had sent for a doctor, and had concealed Cipriano in his own house until the constable, after a fruitless search for anybody who knew anything about the scrap, had gone.

José laughed at his gratitude and explained that the "boss" was afraid of arrest on his own account; but Cipriano only knew what was, and José's tongue was not always to be trusted.

And now there was trouble brewing between Garm and Baxter, who had lately filed a claim upon one hundred and sixty acres of the best land in Sycamore Cañon. Baxter had the restless, gambling blood of '49 as an inheritance. He had spent his life in prospecting—for gold, water, soil, anything whatever with a shade of promise and of risk in it. He had come into the valley with the announced intention of "beatin' ol' Garm at his own game," and this was the entering wedge.

Sycamore Cañon was but a north and south cut in the Coast range. The winds of the north gathered themselves together and poured through it, as though there were no other vent for them in all the world. They blew so steadily and so strongly that the sparse growth of alders and willows along the water course all pointed southward. The great sycamores, with gnarled and distorted branches, bent to the south until their trunks were nearer horizontal than upright. Only the stubborn masses of the live-oaks—solid blocks of dark green—stood erect before the blasts. Garm had, in devious ways, secured title to several hundred of the best acres between the barren, rock-strewn mountain sides, and had persuaded some winking official to declare the rest of the land "mineral." By filing fictitious placer claims, he had thus far kept out other settlers.

Baxter, with others, had petitioned to have the land restored to the agricultural class, and, in the meantime, had filed his claim and was freely boasting that he would raise a crop this year that would forever settle the status of the land.

It was José, the silken-bearded, velvet-eyed, treacherous Sonorian, Garm's chief henchman, who reported this threat. His eyes sparkled with the double animation of surprising and frightening "the boss" as with rapid, gesture-pointed speech, he told his tale.

"This is one of your damned lies, José," Garm cried in a rage.

"*Por Dios, Señor,* this is the truth," José swore. "I was but smoking a cigarette under the big oak by the road and I slept perhaps a wink. I woke to hear Baxter and Pass, of the gold tooth, talking in the road."

"The land office had no right to file his claim. I covered that land with mineral claims five years ago," stormed Garm.

"But we havn't done any work on them. If it comes to a showdown we might lose 'em, even if it is declared mineral land," suggested his son, Charley, a swarthy, blue-eyed mixture of his father's Irish-New England blood and his mother's degenerate Indian-white compound.

"Oh, hell! Who's goin' to prove that we ain't done ev'rything accordin' to law? How many homesteads would go through if the law was held to ev'ry time? We'll see—we'll see," the old man sputtered; "I'll put a wire fence 'round that piece of land—and the man that goes inside my fence is trespassin'. I'll give 'em fair warning; any man that trespasses on my land will get a bullet through him—that's all!"

As the last wire of the hastily constructed fence was stretched, Baxter, accompanied by his friend Pass, rode up to Garm. A taunting smile wrinkled and pleated the loose, bronzed skin of his weathered face, as he remarked with mocking suavity:

"I'm much obleeged to you, Mr. Garm. What with the dry season, an' the sheep destroyin' my pastur', I couldn't 'a' afforded to fence my land this year; but you have saved me the trouble an' expense. I'm very much obleeged."

The two men wheeled and galloped away, while Garm, blind with fury, yelled threats after them. He set up large signs, warning trespassers to "keep off or take the consequences," and he charged his men to keep close watch and to shoot Baxter, or any of his friends, if they were found within the fence.

"I'll stand by you, *hombres*—you blaze away and I'll see you through," he commanded.

None of the men except Cipriano took this order seriously, or had any intention of shooting anybody. But Ciprano, peaceably disposed by nature, and with a wholesome dread of the constable, who represented the law to him, still felt that Garm as *el patron* and his *amigo* had a right to command. He brooded over the matter and carefully avoided the vicinity of that fence, lest he might happen to see an intruder.

Baxter, in the meantime, had announced definitely and defiantly that he intended to plow that ground as soon as rain enough should fall so that a plowshare could be set in it. Garm publicly and repeatedly declared his intention of beginning his long delayed "workings," as soon as rain came. Both men put their tools in readiness and then settled down to watch one another and the weather.

There were days when the sun shone in an unflecked sky as persistently—and almost as fervidly—as if it were midsummer instead of midwinter. There were cloudy days, too, when light clouds floated over the mountain tops from the east, and other days when heavy, black clouds straggled down from the north; sometimes these thickened and lowered until the rainfall seemed at hand. Once or twice a drizzle moistened the dust. But again and again all promise failed, leaving the ranchers who depended upon the annual rains for their crops, with sober faces and sickening hearts. It was not until late January that the blessed downpour came.

At four o'clock the next morning José shook Cipriano awake.

"Come," he called, *"el patron* will begin to dig for gold today."

Cipriano stumbled across the log that did duty as a bridge and up the slippery path to the ranch house on the hill, where José and Ramon were loading the wagon. Garm himself came out with three guns in hand.

"Don't you let Baxter, or any of his crowd, set foot in that field—ef you have to shoot ev'ry one of 'em," he directed, as he parceled out ammunition. "You go on down with the boys, Charley," he said to his son, "an' I'll come after I have my breakfast."

The rain had ceased and a dense, white fog had crowded into the valley and was blanketing everything from sight. When the slowly moving wagon left the main road, it was impossible to see the slight track, and José followed the fence, guiding the driver with his voice.

"The dogs have not entered this way," he said, as he undid the heavy padlock at the gate.

"You won't catch Baxter out o' bed this early," grumbled young Garm, who loved his bed in the morning and whose heart was not much in the business at best.

They had unloaded the tools and were ready to begin the first furrow, when the mist which had been rapidly thinning suddenly parted and a scarf of it floated upward.

"God! What's that?" Charley Garm cried. Across the field, men, teams, and a long black line of freshly turned earth was revealed.

"They've cut the fence somewhere," José exclaimed.

"Get your guns ready, *hombres,*" young Garm ordered. "We've got to drive those devils out——"

The boy's one distinction was that he had once wounded a man in a drinking brawl. It was up to him to maintain his reputation, he felt.

"Shall we not wait till *el padre* comes?" José suggested insinuatingly. He knew as well as the son that the elder Garm would not appear that morning. But already Baxter and his men were coming toward them, and Garm was put on the defensive.

"What you folks doin' on my land?" Baxter called as he came within hailing distance. "You'd better get off————quick!"

"Your land?" Garm was derisive—"Your land?" and he let loose a string of vituperative English and Spanish that would have made a wild west drama.

"Yes, my land! I have got the papers from the United States land office to prove that I have filed a homestead claim——"

"My father took out papers five years ago," Garm retorted.

"And he has complied with the law?" and Baxter waved a contemptuous hand.

"He has done as much work to hold his claim as you will ever do. Come, Cipriano—Ramon—what are you standing there for? Get to work!"

"No," Baxter addressed the Indians who stood by, silent and inert. "You *hombres vamos!* This ain't none o' your fight, an' I don't want to hurt you. You, Cipriano, you're a good man—*vamos, pronto.*"

"You stay here," Garm turned to his men commandingly; then he lifted his shotgun. Quick as he was, Baxter was ready for him.

"Drop that gun!" His words rang sharp and his hammer clicked. "Drop it!" Charley sullenly obeyed. "An' now you an' these poor devils, git out o' here, quick!"

"Why don't you shoot, José? Shoot, Ramon—Cipriano," Garm screamed in helpless rage.

He glanced over his shoulder to see José scudding close to earth for the fence, with Ramon following on his heels.

"Cipriano," he repeated desperately, "shoot—shoot, I say."

Cipriano reluctantly lifted his gun from the ground. He had no desire to shoot Baxter. He had no impulse to fire the weapon. But Baxter's son could not know that. The boy fired. The gun rattled against the plow handle. The Indian swayed, then doubled up and fell in a heap.

"I didn't go fer to kill him, pa! I didn't mean ter kill him!" the boy, white and shaking, gasped as he saw the result of his act.

But Baxter's attention was fixed on Charley Garm. "No, you don't," he cried as that youth stealthily tried to work his revolver loose. "Here, Pass, unload him!" And now," he finished, "you git out an' don't you never let me ketch you, or your ol' man, er any of the rest o' the poor devils you have under your thumb, on this hunderd an' sixty agen'. One dead man's enough——"

They lifted Cipriano into an easier position and stood by, watching his convulsive movements and spurting breath. The boy—he was only nineteen—knelt on the ground beside his victim and watched with fascinated, awe-stricken eyes, the dying struggle.

"I'm awful sorry, Cipriano," he wailed again and again, "I'm awful sorry—I didn't want to kill ye—"

With a last groan, the wounded man turned himself over so that his face was in the direction of the creek and the little house under the willows. His lips formed the name "Isadora," but no one heard it.

The two men were already conferring. "I reckon, Dave, we'd better go right into Ventura an' give you up to the sheriff—that'll be the quickest way out o' this," the father said.

"And Cipriano?" the boy, who was still kneeling, asked.

"Oh, Garm'll bury him, I reckon, seein' he lost his life through his orders. Come on."

And the three men rode away hurriedly, leaving the Indian—he was an Indian now—stretched out on the damp ground, his only watchers the restless, stamping horses still attached to the plow.

# Simple Tony

"SIMPLE" Tony walked up Market street with the swinging, irregular gait of the man who is not used to solid ground under his feet. To the passing crowd he was but an undersized "Dago" fisherman. But to himself, at that moment, Tony was a king. His fingers in his pockets opened and closed and slipped caressingly over the gold pieces he had just received for his last month's catch. In his breast pocket was the little brown bank-book, with a balance of $410 to his credit—Tony could see the figures as they stood at the bottom of the page. Today he would change them to $450—a fortune.

"More money than Tim Connelly has—or ever will have," Tony told himself exultantly. "If only Mary could see my bank-book—if she knew that it is all for her," he was thinking. "Tomorrow night I will go to see her—I will show her—I am ready, now—" And for the thousandth time Tony began to rehearse the scene that had become the center of his existence. He pictured Mary's blue eyes growing tender as she listened to the words that revealed his devotion and his riches, and her hands yielding to his hands as he drew her, at last, to his arms.

And then Tony stopped short. There — just ahead of him, stood Mary! The wind was flipping golden wisps of hair about her forehead and her eyes were dancing joyously as she smiled up into Tim Connelly's face. They were standing before a glittering window, and the tidy young Irishman, with his hat pushed far back on his upspringing top-knot, was laughing boyishly. Tony, gripped by the anguish of a long expected possibility suddenly become a solid reality, turned to escape. It was too late. They had seen him, and Tim came forward with extended hand.

"Hey, Tony," he cried heartily, "you've caught us. We was just looking for the ring."

Tony scarcely knew his own voice as he repeated stumblingly, "The ring?—what ring?"

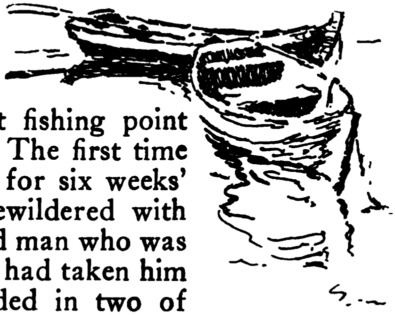
"Why, the wedding ring—for Mary—the finest girl ever," and Tim laid a possessing hand on the girl's arm. Mary, blushing deeply and, perhaps, from the heights of her happiness understanding something of Tony's pain, spoke with the gentle friendliness that had so long held the Italian captive:

"You know, Tony, Tim and me have waited a long time, and now he's got such a good job we're going to be married next week. You must wish us luck—won't you?"

"Yes," Tony answered in uncertain English and with a waver in his voice that he could not quite control, "Yes, Tim is good boy! I wish you verra happee."

"Thank you, Tony," and for an instant her hand lay white and warm in Tony's black, cold fingers; then she followed Tim into the jeweler's shop.

Tony went on up Market street. He reached the bank and passed it, without entering. What was the use? He had no need for money now. He would spend the gold in his pocket—blow it in—he knew what the other fishermen did with their money, though he had taken small part in their revels.



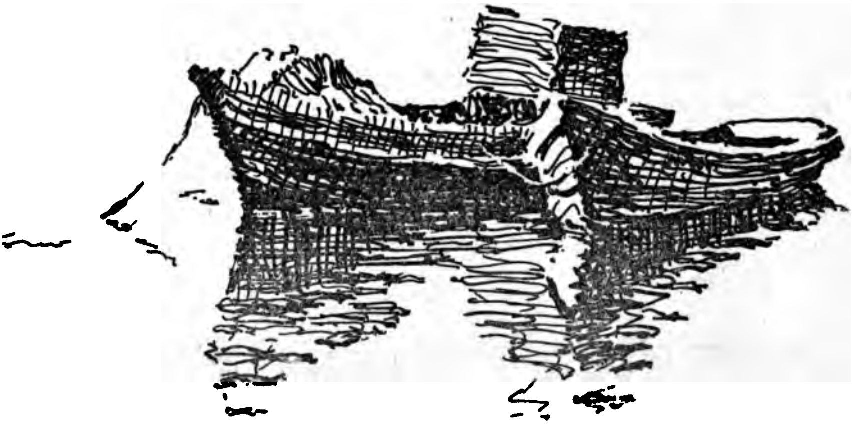
Giuseppe, his father's friend, had sent him as a raw immigrant to Bolinas Bay—the best fishing point on the Pacific Coast. The first time Tony had drawn $60 for six weeks' catch, he had been bewildered with so much gold. The old man who was the czar of his people, had taken him to the bank and handed in two of Tony's gleaming eagles and received the little book. He had explained it all carefully to Tony, but the next morning when the doors opened, the new fisherman had appeared at the window. The clerk was used to his kind. He wrote a check and shoved out the gold. Then Tony had shaken his head and gone away satisfied.

Soon after that he had seen Mary—first at mass, and then in the kitchen where she reigned supreme. Her winsome face and friendly smile had won his heart at once, and then he began to dream—and to think. He had thought that money might be the magic that would turn his dream to fact. He had toiled hard and lived frugally, and put his money in the bank—and—this was the end!

His fingers still played with the gold as he turned back down the street; but the thrill in its touch was gone. It seemed now that he had always known it must be like this. How should Mary—all pink and white and gold—and Irish—ever belong to a little, black "Dago" fisherman? And yet for almost three years he had hoped for this one thing and worked for it. Alone in his boat, pitching with the mighty swells of the Pacific, or tossing on the lapping waves of the bay, he had thought of Mary's lips, he had held her in his arms, he had dwelt with her in his home.

The lady of the village loved Tony, she said, "because he did what he was told, as he was told—and had no opinions about it." She never suspected that Tony's devotion to her hedges, her roses and her woodpile was due entirely to his love for her maid. On days when the fish were not running, or the market was glutted ,or the ocean was stirred to its depths, Tony clipped and dug and chopped, happy beyond words at Mary's cheery "How are ye the mornin', Tony, now?" and at glimpses of her blue calico and echoes of her bubbling laughter, as she swept the porches, or gathered peas, or ran on errands.

But it was the dinner hour he lived for; then he was in the room with her; he could watch the dimples flutter as she mocked his English, or teasingly questioned of his "gurrl" in the "ol' " country! Yet he had been conscious that always she looked upon him as "Simple Tony"—a name he had borne since



first his black eyes had opened wide in amazement at the strange ways of this new world.

Once the lady had engaged his boat for a day's sketching. Mary had come, too. All that blissful day, as they floated on the softly swaying waters, or swept into land-locked inlets where reeds and green things had slipped from the hillsides into the the water, Mary had sat before his eyes. He had looked into her face, laughed with her, touched her fingers as he took her fish from the hook. The girl had coquetted with him as innocently as a kitten plays with a ball. They were both young and "simple" and happy.

After that day, Tony began to build an addition to his cabin—rather his shack became an addition to a big, square room with large windows, a glass door, and pink flowered paper on its walls. The villagers had joked and questioned and declared, " 'Simple Tony' better catch his bird before he builds his nest." But to all their words Tony only smiled wisely and stated that "a man must have a house to live in." Though, of a truth, Tony would as soon have thought of putting up at the Palace Hotel as of using that room himself.

Mary had challenged him once: "So you are thinking of gettin' married, Tony?"

"Yes," he had admitted, his heart beginning to thump.

"And is the gurrl comin' from Italy? No? Thin does she live in Bolinas? Ah, Tony, but you are the sly one! Do I know her?"

He nodded. "You—you are the girl—the only one!" His heart cried the words; they were on his tongue; he opened his lips to utter them—but his throat was dry, and before he could make a sound his eyes had spoken, and his eager, working face had warned her. She hastily answered an imaginary call.

And since that day he had scarcely seen her. The house had cost much money, and he would not touch his bank account. He had gone out at daybreak, and when the fishing was good he had stayed out late—all night, sometimes. He had thought bravely that his deeds might count more than Tim Connelly's words. Simple, simple Tony!

He went back down Market street blindly, dodging women and teams. He turned toward the Italian quarter, stopping at last on a corner where he could look down to the embankment of masts, looming black against the white fog. He wished the "butter boat" were sailing for Bolinas tonight. He hungered for his own boat and a stiff row against beating, dripping waves—a row that would take all his strength and mind and blot out the stifling pain that was choking him. And yet—what was the use of it all? Why should he go on? He had come to the end of hope.

A woman was crossing the street toward him. Unthinkingly he noted the downtrodden heels; the cautious, balancing gait; the distorted outline and the shabby feathers, drooping disconsolately in the fog. As she neared him she broke into a shrill, nervous laugh and held out her hands.

"If it ain't Tony Orsetti," she cried; "I haven't seen you since the day before never! When'd you come to town?"

He recognized her then as Elena Campi, whose father had been a native of his own village. He looked curiously at the paint and powder, through which patches of yellow skin stood out like blots, and into the bold, unveiled eyes. She had not been like this when he had last seen her.

"I didn't know you were married," he said to her in Italian.

She threw back her head with a crackle of laughter, though a dull red burned through the coating on her skin.

"Me! Married!" in English. "Never! I don't tie myself to no man—to do his dirty work. I'd rather———" and she turned meaning eyes upon him.

Tony understood and shrank. "How is your father?" he asked, awkwardly.

"I don't know. He's got a new wife and they ain't got no use fer me—they turned me out!" Her tone was bitter. Then, suddenly the recklessness of her manner melted away like breath on frosty air. She shivered and her face was drawn and old. "Tony," she almost whispered, "Tony, kin you lend me a dollar? I ain't had nothin' but a glass o' beer an' a sandwich since yesterday mornin'—it's God's truth!"

Tony's fingers closed upon one of his gold pieces. He would give it to her—he had no use for it. Then his eyes met hers again and he read there a misery that matched his own.

"Come, Elena," he said abruptly, "we will go and have dinner somewhere together."

"Not there!" she exclaimed, when he turned toward Giuseppe's place, and she guided him down the street to another red brick establishment and through the front room into a curtained booth. She threw her hat aside and drank feverishly of the wine he ordered and ate hungrily of the spaghetti and steak; but after a few mouthfuls she pushed her plate aside and dropped her head wearily into her hands.

Tony spoke then. "How was it, Elena?"

She looked up at him with a touch of defiance, as she said:

"I loved him—an' I thought he was goin' to marry me—he said so. He was a foreman, and American—and I, after all, I'm only a 'Dago,' though I was born in 'Frisco! And when I found he'd lied to me an' was gone—back east—they said, I didn't care. They fired me pretty soon from the fact'ry an' then my ol' man turned me down—it was the woman, though, made him do it. There wasn't nothin' else fer me but the streets—it's about ended, now. Pretty soon I'll go down there——" she motioned toward the bay.

Tony listened to her in silence; only the knuckles of his weather-hardened hands were white when she spoke of the foreman. Presently she dropped her head upon the table and began to cry in a spent way, like a child who has almost sobbed itself to sleep. Tony sat and watched her, feeling mutely through his own pain and bewilderment that she, too, had loved, and hoped, and been cruelly disappointed. At last he put out his hand and touched her hair.

"Come, Elena," he said, "don't cry anymore. I have a house and I will take care of you. We will be married in the morning and then—go home." His breath caught a little on the last word, but he brought it out.

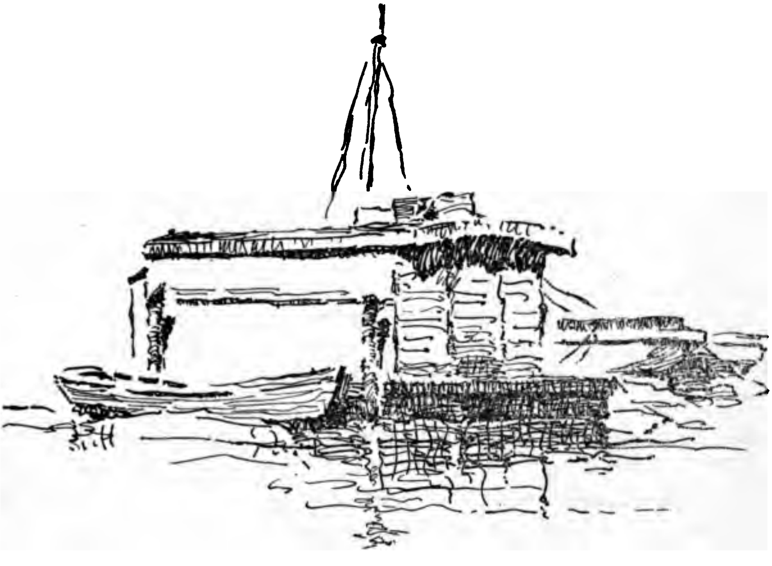
She lifted a face clawed by tears and her eyes were wide with suspicious amazement. "Do you mean it, Tony? Marry me—now?"

"Yes," he said, steadily, "that is the only way. We will go to the priest in the morning."

"Oh, Tony!" she stretched her arms across the table with a gasping cry. "Oh, Tony! You're better to me than the Holy Virgin! I've prayed and prayed, and been to early mass, and said my beads—and she didn't do nothin' to help me!"

A dim light struggled up through Tony's slow brain.

"Maybe," he said slowly, hesitatingly, "maybe the Holy Mother did hear you—and sent me. Maybe," he went on humbly in his heart, "this is best for me, too."



# Ambitious Marta

THE sun poured down on the unshaded stretches of the road that wound through the noon-hushed valley until the dust fairly boiled over the bare feet of Marta as she trudged through it. From a cloud of dust came the rapid rattle of hoofs and wheels and then the new varnish of a smart open buggy reflected the sunlight. Two much powdered girls, wearing light summer dresses, gaily flowered hats and bright hair ribbons, pulled up with a laughing call in Spanish:

"Hola, Marta! Is it not hot to walk?" and one added, "And thy feet—are they not cooked?" Then Josefa caught the flare of anger in Marta's eyes and went on graciously, "Thy *papá* and *mamá*—are they well?"

*"'Sta bueno,"* Marta answered shortly, her face scarlet under its warm cream, her hands clinched tight.

With a flick of the whip, the Espinosa girls flashed by, and from the receding dust-veil Marta caught an echo of laughter.

She stamped her foot in helpless rage, crying aloud:

"They poke fun at me for I have not clothes like theirs—but I shall have fine clothes—I shall—" and she began to run, her long braids, tied with cord, whipping her back; her scant skirt flopping and twisting about her legs, and her white teeth flashing with her panting breath. On she ran, through scalding sun and cooling shade, until she turned into a lane and came to a panting pause beneath a great pepper tree.

Her father, his white hair matted on his drooping head, his cigarette fallen into ash, sat upon the ground. Near him her mother, with *manta* slipped from her head and needle still clasped in her fingers, slept peacefully. Stretched at full length on the clean-swept ground, the old white dog let the flies buzz about him unheeded. Even the old adobe *casa,* with its sagging roof and cracked walls, seemed to have fallen into profound repose.

But Marta, catching her breath, called eagerly, "*Padre, madre!* Wake up — wake up!" and she seized her mother by the shoulder and gave her a little shake, while Pedro Dominguez, rubbing his eyes and flicking the ashes from his fingers, asked crossly:

"What ails thee, child?—such a whirlwind—"

She stood before them, tall and straight, her eyes flaming with excitement and anger, and talked rapidly in her native tongue. But soon her father interrupted her hotly:

"Art thou *loco?* Thou—a Dominguez—to work for an American—as a servant!"

"What if I bear the name of Dominguez?" she flashed back. "Look," she caught up her faded and tattered blue calico, "this is my only dress—my best! And *mamá* has no better." She pointed to her bare, brown feet. "See! I have no shoes—no stockings—and I am too big to go barefooted longer. Today—" she choked again with anger—"Today, those Espinosa girls laughed at me—because I was barefoot! I will go to the Browns — I will earn money and have clothes—like other girls. Think—*dos pesos y medio* ($2.50) each week—it is much money!"

Pedro groaned in scorn. "Hear her! Money—she knows not of what she speaks. Once we had money—cattle and horses were gold then. *'Dos pesos y medio'!*" He laughed.

"But we have no money now, father, nor horses nor cattle. And Juan and Rafael are gone and they send no money for long. Soon the flour and *frijoles* will all be gone—what shall we do then? Shall we starve?"

There was no answer to her question. Old Pedro stared at the blue-hazed mountains down the valley in silence, while his wife wiped tears from cheeks that were dark and deeply wrinkled. Their sons had never before failed them; but the long silence of this last absence was becoming ominous. Marta went on more gently, "I am young and strong—it will not hurt me to work. And then, you shall have plenty of tobacco and *mamá* shall have coffee and sugar—and I—I shall have clothes!"

The old Californian again remonstrated, feebly, "You shall not go—my daughter work in the kitchen of an American—no, no!"

But the mother had been the Indian serving maid of a long dead Señora Domniguez. She rose from the ground and, with a smile of approval, went inside with her daughter to aid in such preparations as are possible to a girl with but one frock.

The grating of wheels presently drew them both to the door. An ancient buckboard, with wobbling wheels, lopping springs and broken floor, drawn by a gaunt, shaggy beast whose sagging head seemed to be in danger from his stumbling feet, came to a stop. A young Indian—built like a live oak stump for strength and immobility—stepped from the vehicle and lifted with one hand a loaded gunny sack. With a brief salute, he brought the sack into the house.

"Oh la! acorns," Señora Dominguez cried in joy. "Thou dost not forget thy old aunt, Manuel," and she laughed until her fat sides shook.

But his eyes were on Marta. "What happens?" he asked.

It was old Pedro who poured out the story of Marta's wilfulness. The youth listened without speech. At the end, he turned to the girl and said:

"That cannot be. You may not become the slave of a strange woman. You will marry me, and I will work for all—" with a movement of his hand he indicated her parents.

Marta threw back her head with a mocking laugh. "And thou wilt give me clothes!" And she pointed to his grimed and ragged overalls and jumper, "Pretty dresses with lace and ribbons and hats with flowers—like those Espinosa's—"

"You shall have all that I can make," he replied simply, "and I am strong."

"Better think of it, girl," her mother advised. "Manuel is a good man—and he has the rancho of his father—"

"A patch of mountain edge," Marta scoffed. "No! I am strong, too—I will work for myself," and she turned back to her iron.

The Browns were prosperous ranchers and their home, plain and crude as it was, opened a new world to Marta Dominguez. Mrs. Brown, one of the women who must talk without ceasing, made a companion of her new "help" and took great pride and credit to herself for the rapid progress the girl made. She declared to her visitors:

"Its jest amazin' the way that Marta learns! Why, when she come here she couldn't say 'aye, yes or no' in English—and now she can talk as fast as anybody. An' when I set her to makin' biscuits, she didn't know enough to put in sody—actually. Now she can cook pretty nigh as good as I can, an' as for sewin', I never could cut an' fit the easy way she does!"

When the white dress, with ribbons, was ready, Marta began to attend the neighborhood dances and parties. More than one young *Mejicano* sought her favors; but they all stood back when Adolfo Espinosa, whose family claimed pure Castilian descent and were the aristocrats of Las Sombras valley, began to pay her marked attention.

It was a proud day for the girl and for her parents when Espinosa, after a few weeks of devotion, asked Marta to marry him. Pedro Dominguez granted his consent with something of the ceremony and graciousness that belonged to days long since past. But to his intense surprise and disgust, Marta declared that she was not yet ready—she must have more clothes; while her lover seemed to be quite willing that his betrothed should continue to stay at the Browns and earn three dollars a week.

A new hand, a sallow, lean-limbed young Missourian was added to the Brown household about this time. Curt Weston had no intention of harming the young "Mexican" girl whose broken language and quick wit, he found amusing; but they were thrown into close contact—and they were both "green as grass," as Mrs. Brown put it.

"Ye'd think ter see 'em makin' eyes that neither one o' 'em ever see a critter o' the opposite sect before," declared this observant lady.

It was at a dance in the Espinosa *casa* that the trouble began. The bright costumes, the light-hearted laughter, the vivid gestures of the señoritas was in strong contrast with the dingy walls, the cavernous windows, the smoke-blackened ceilings of the old adobe. Adolfo Espinosa, who betrayed his blue blood only by the latent fire in his sleepy eyes and a lazy grace of motion that was cat-like, was selling numbers. Marta, laughing and chattering even more vivaciously than usual—for she felt the critical eyes of the Espinosa sisters upon her—was left unclaimed.

When Weston came up and asked for the first dance, she hesitated; she knew well enough that it would be regarded not only as a breach of etiquette, but as a direct slight to her fiancé. But the calling of the instruments, the shuffling of impatient feet, and the challenge in the eyes of the American, tempted her—she slipped her hand into his crooked elbow.

The violin and guitar played a slow, swinging melody to which the dancers beat a rhythmic time. As he held the girl's vibrant form and looked down into her soft, black eyes, Weston felt a new thrill. Dance followed dance in rapid succession; the room grew warm; the candle grease on the floor was slippery as wax; the air was heavy with fumes of cigarettes and sour wine; and still without a pause, the dancers kept up their steady swing and glide. At last Josefa Espinosa said to her brother, "Do you see?"

"See what?" he demanded gruffly.

She nodded toward Marta and Weston, who were whirling past, "How many times has she danced with that *gringo* tonight?" she whispered.

"It is no matter," but his indifference was poorly simulated. The girl smiled wisely as she turned away.

Their quarrel that night was like the quarrels of more sophisticated lovers—complaints, reproaches, tears, relenting, promises and reconciliation, with Marta conducting—and enjoying—every stage of it.

Like all native Californians, Marta was strongly attached to her parents and to the old home, poor as it was. The greatest pleasure of her life was her Sunday afternoon visits, when she carried tobacco to her father, a new apron or handkerchief to her mother and gossip of all her new clothes and experiences to both.

When Adolfo failed to appear one Sunday afternoon, she wandered about the empty Brown house very disconsolately, picking out tunes on the parlor organ, studying portraits in the family album of half-clad infants and much-clad bridal couples, and gazing longingly down the road. Curt drove in at last and cried in surprise:

"Why, Marta, aint you gone yet? Where's 'Dolf?"

"I do' know," she answered with a brave attempt at carelessness.

"Aint he a comin' today?"

"It don't look like that," her voice trembled a little in spite of her laugh.

"Well, Dolly an' me aint got nothin' else to do—I'll take you home, if you want—"

They were hardly out of sight when Espinosa drove into the yard, his little black mare wet, and plastered with dust. When he was satisfied that no one was at home, he started up the road at a furious pace, until he came in sight of the two jogging leisurely ahead. Then he wheeled about, with some very black words on his tongue.

The quarrel after this affair was not so satisfactorily settled—perhaps Marta had her reasons for this. The next Sunday evening found her on the bench underneath the big pear tree back of the Brown's storeroom, with Curt by her side. While her knowledge like her English—she could not read or write in any language—was very limited, the girl had a keenness of perception quite lacking in the young American. She had a way, too, of appealing to his superior wisdom that was flattering—and no other woman had ever found it worth her while to flatter him. They had become very good friends, and he soon learned that Adolfo had ordered her to go home and on her refusal had broken the engagement.

"And how can I go home?" she sobbed. "My father—he is ol' an' he not work—my brothers are far off an' they send little money—how can I have things, if I not work? An' I not marry 'Dolf without ni-ice things—those Espinosa girls they make fun at me!"

"'Dolf's a fool," Curt muttered. He had no need to ask reasons for the young Mexican's anger—they had already had hot words on the subject. He proceeded to soothe Marta's troubled mind with words and caresses that might mean much or little. And the girl stayed on at the Browns.

Weeks slipped into months and the intimacy between the Mexican girl and the white man grew, until Mrs. Brown began to consider the situation serious.

"Its jest no use a-talkin', I aint goin' to stan' such goin's on eny longer," she announced to her husband one evening. "Here it is half-past nine and Curt an' Marta out under that pear tree yet—"

"Oh well, I reckon they're ol' enough to know what they're about," observed Mr. Brown drowsily.

"It don't look like it," his wife returned tartly. "I've tol' that girl time an' ag'in that she ought not to go on that-away an' she jest giggles! I as't her today if she an' Curt was goin' to git married an' she jest laughed and said, 'I do' know'." Mrs. Brown slammed the outside door emphatically, as a hint.

"'Taint none o' our business, anyway," muttered Brown, who was half asleep.

"Yes, it is our business, too, Tom, an' I tell you—if it aint stopped—one o' 'em's got to go!"

Roused by this, her husband sat up in bed, "Nonsense, Molly! You know you can't get along without Marta. An' Curt's the best hand with horses I ever had. I can't let him go."

"You speak to Curt, then," coaxed his wife, "tell him he ought not to fool that-a-way with Marta—"

When Curt came in to dinner the next day, after one glance at Marta's woebegone countenance, he turned to Mrs. Brown and demanded:

"What you-all been a sayin' to Marta?"

Mrs. Brown straightened herself for battle: "I've jes' tol' her that I wasn't goin' to have enymore such goin's on. Ef you an' her can't quit flirtin', one o' you's got to leave—"

"Marta," the young man turned to the shamefaced girl, "you go an' pack up your duds an' we'll both go, mighty quick! I won't allow my future wife to be bossed an' insulted that-a-way by nobody."

"Land o' goodness!" Mrs. Brown gasped, "'taint a half hour since Marta tol' me you an' her wasn't engaged at all—"

"Well, we're engaged now, aint we, Marta? An' you get ready quick."

Half-dazed with surprise and joy the girl obeyed. For months her one dream, her wildest flight of imagination, had been to marry this man—a white man—and to live like "white folks" and, incidentally, to show the Espinosa's that their sneers and innuendos had been misplaced. She could scarcely believe, at first, that this ambition was really to be fulfilled.

Yet, when her new intended urged an immediate wedding, she insisted that she could not be married yet—she must have more "things." In truth, with one desire granted, a new ambition stirred—she would not be married until she had an outfitting equal to that of Mrs. Brown herself. That good lady had often gone over the details of her trousseau—"a dozen o' everything, sheets, an' towels, an' piller slips and two pairs o' shams—one braided an' one ruffled—an' six good dresses." A recital which never failed to fill Marta with wonder and envy.

With her experience and reputation, she had no trouble in finding a new place to work, and here she devoted every spare moment to her preparations. After a hard day's toil, she would stitch away until late in the night, dreaming of the little cottage that Curt had once spoken of renting. She could see the "big" room with its white-robed bed, the table with its snowy cover, the dainty white curtains, the passion vine she meant to train over the window and the gay flowers in her yard. And then she would fancy the chagrin of the Espinosa girls as they drove by—the Espinosa girls—not one of whom was married, even to one of her own countrymen.

In spite of her industry, her store of linen and garments grew but slowly, for her time was small and much of her wages went to the comfort of her parents. It was six months before she gave up the place, confiding to her disappointed mistress that she was going home to get ready for, "Curt not like to wait too long, maybe—"

The next Sunday Curt did not appear. But Marta had company and in the delight of displaying her piles of freshly laundered whiteness and the new dresses she was making, scarcely missed him until his partner, Jim West, rode into the yard with a message for her. Weston had received a telegram announcing the serious illness of his father.

"He jest packed right up, an' I took him into town an' he took the noon train fer ol' Missouri," was the report. "He was awful sorry he didn't have time to come up an' see you an' he'll write to you soon's he gets there."

Marta's heart sank at the news which must still further delay her day of triumph; but she kept on with her dressmaking. One letter came and then there were weeks of waiting. The new dresses were finished and laid away; the last stitch was set. Her friends began to question openly Curt's intentions; but even after she knew that his horses and other belongings had been disposed of, the girl asserted loyally, "Curt all right—he come back *poco tiempo*."

But at last a letter came—a letter of which she refused to accept her own stumbling version, even when reinforced by that of a neighbor's daughter, who went to school. She carried the letter to her last mistress. Stripped of its devious excuses and reasons, the simple truth was plain—Weston would not return to California and she would never see him again.

When she at last was convinced, Marta sprang to her feet with a shriek. Grief, rage, shame shook her; she stormed about the room, weeping, wringing her hands, and calling on all the saints she knew. The self-possessed American woman, shocked by the passion of the warmer-blooded Californian, left her alone.

When she returned, Marta, wiping her eyes, pleaded: "Don't you tell I cry for Curt—people will laugh an' talk about me! Don't you tell—and they shall not know I feel bad. Those Espinosas—and Mrs. Brown—they be glad if they know. I not cry more."

Six weeks later the Spanish-speaking population for miles about was bidden to a wedding *fiesta* at the Dominguez home, to celebrate the marriage of Marta with her cousin, Manuel. Her brother Rafael had returned. He had sold his mining claim for $300 and he was a rich man. When he heard his sister's story, he swore that she should have a wedding that would make up for all her disappointments. The priest was brought from San Juan; a supper was served that would have graced the days of which old Pedro Dominguez still mumbled; and the dance lasted till noon the next day.

When it was all over, Marta climbed into the old buckboard of her husband; her trunk full of finery was roped on behind, and they drove up and up, through rocky creek beds and over stony ridges, until they reached an unplastered adobe, sheltered by a rock-hung cliff.

There Marta, her hair hanging in a heavy, unkempt braid, her soiled calico open at the throat, often her feet bare, sits on the ground—in the sun or in the shade—as needs, and contentedly watches her babies playing with the hens and the big, white turkey gobbler, about the door.

# Faith Triumphant

ONLY one room was left untouched, when Señor Carlos Duprez and his dainty child-wife first came to dwell in the fortress-like adobe *hacienda,* standing high against the foothills, underneath weeping willow and giant fig trees. That was the room which old Tiburcio Estenaga, father of *"la Señora Catalina,"* had occupied as a bedroom and from whence—without warning and quite alone—his soul had taken flight. In this room the ox-hide stretched between four posts was still covered by a silken spread, the window spaces were closed only by heavy wooden shutters, and the shrine, with its iron cross bearing the Christ, remained the only ornament. And this room Señora Duprez elected to use herself; for in spite of her happiness and her gay life, Catalina was still *"la religiosa"* of her convent days. Though the dance might last till daybreak, she told every bead and repeated all her prayers, before she slipped under the cover.

They were brilliant days—of sunshine and carefree hours and happy hearts, when first the young couple came back to Rancho Cucamonga — the unmeasured leagues left by Don Tiburcio to his only daughter and heir. First of all they renovated the place. For ten years past old Juana, the housekeeper, and José Juan, the mayor-domo, had been its only occupants, and the dark, cell-like rooms of the old house had been closed to sun and air. Now they were all thrown wide; new windows were cut through the massive walls and glass was set; carpets were laid on the earthen floors; furnishings bought from the vessels in San Pedro harbor—richly carved sofas and chairs and four-poster beds, took the place of the rawhide beds and chairs that had served Don Tiburcio.

Gay voices rang through the *patio;* the tinkle of the guitar and of wine glasses, the patter and stamp of dancing feet, the echo of merry songs, filled the low rooms. Only the room of *la señora* was never intruded upon, and the devotions of the saint-like Catalina never interrupted, however long drawn out and merry, the *fiesta.*

The one grief of these early years was that Carlos, son of the church though he was, had grown cold and neglected the holy offices and scoffed at her cherished plan to build a chapel here at home, where they themselves might worship and gather the servants and Indians of the rancho into closer communion with Holy Church. Carlos only laughed, or strummed his guitar, or vowed that she was saint enough for all of them, when she spoke of these things.

Life could not be all sunshine and frolic, even in the golden days of Nueva California. Rancho Cucamonga was far from Los Angeles, and no other ranchos were close. For weeks together, some times, the only guests were a passing *ranchero* or *vaquero,* who stopped for a fresh mount, or a bottle of the famous Cucamonga wine. Sometimes, too, Don Carlos was absent for days upon his affairs, as he told his wife. Then Señora Catalina looked to her household, played with her babies and set endless dainty stitches.

It was in such a siesta time as this that old Juana told her mistress the story of the buried treasure.

Juana was now too old for active service. All day she crouched in the *patio;* in the sun on wintry days, in the shade in summertime. This day was a drowsy summer afternoon. Señora Catalina sat in a low chair in the shade of a wide-thrown passion vine, while the baby played on the clean-swept earth and Juana sat upright, more alive than her mistress had ever seen her before.

"It was just after thy mother died and thou, *pobrecita,* went to the house of thy god-mother. *El papá* had been to the city and had bad news. *Los Americanos* were coming, it was said, and would take all from our people. There was talk, too, of strangers at Rancho del Chino. And so *el patron* was sad. He ate no dinner when he came home and went at once to his room. *Poco tiempo,* I feared lest he might be sick with the cold and the wet and I carried a cup of chocolate to his door. Outside the door I heard the rattle of coin, and when I knocked he shouted angry words at me and bade me go away. And—when I crossed the *patio* there was a light in the room and a crack in the shutter—and—I was afraid he might be ill—I peeped in the crack, just a little look, señora, only a little look. I saw thy *papá* standing before a table heaped with coins. I was sorting them and making little piles. And beside him stood the chest he always kept under his bed—he took more money from that. Oh, it was *mucho—mucho dinero,* Señora Catalina!" Her eyes beamed at the recollection.

"After awhile the master came out and ate his supper and then I went to bed. But in the night I heard a noise—as of some heavy thing dragged across the *patio*—and I got up and looked out of my door. I saw thy papa and old Andrés dragging the chest. I saw them lift it into the *carreta,* and then they went away. I do not know how long they were gone, for I went to sleep. But in the morning I asked Andrés what they did with that chest. He told me to hold my tongue—he was always brusque of word! Afterward thy papa called me and told me never to speak to anyone of what I had seen. The saints forgive me for telling you—his daughter—now!"

"I will ask the Virgin and San Antonio to forgive thee," promised Catalina. "But thou hast told this tale to others—is it not so?"

"Only to José Juan—as I live, *señora!* When thy father died, we thought that the chest should be brought back for thee, and we spoke to Andrés. But Andrés said he could never tell where it was; for thy father had made him swear a terrible oath—an oath so awful that he trembled but to speak of it—that he would never tell anyone where it was hidden. Andrés loved and feared thy father. Always he slept in the *patio* beneath his window. When *el señor* died, he did not eat or sleep so long as the body lay in the house. And after that he would never stay here—he built himself the little hut down by the river—thou knowest. And now, Andrés is very old, Señora Catalina, he cannot live much longer—" she paused suggestively.

"Yet he should not break his oath—that is right," Señora Duprez commented.

"A bad promise is best broken," impatiently asserted the old woman. "Soon Andrés will die, and with him will die the secret of that buried treasure—if he tell it not! That is not well."

"But my father may have removed the money himself."

Juana shook her head. "The times were disturbed, fighting and many alarms and lawless men—and the money was safer there in the chest. And then he died—as thou knowest."

"Holy Mother," Catalina sighed, "that treasure would be most welcome now!"

All the rest of the day she thought over this tale, whose truth she could not doubt. She so much desired the chapel, on the knoll near the big live oak—she had almost come to believe that the salvation of her husband depended upon it.

"It is so far to San Gabriel," she argued, "and before he gets there he meets thoughtless friends and then he forgets. But if the good fathers came here to his home, he could not overlook the confession and the masses so. Then, too, such a heap of money would help Carlos in those bad 'affairs' that take so much *dinero.*"

By the next morning she had determined to visit old Andrés. Accompanied by Juana, she went down to the hut—neatly constructed of woven willow and thatched with tules, that stood under a sycamore near the waste of rocks and sand called a creek. The old Indian sat in the sunshine beside his door. He struggled with his rheumatic old joints until he stood on his feet before the daughter of his master. She questioned him as to his health and comfort and presented a red silk handkerchief and a fresh shirt, before she began, with a little flutter of doubt in her tone; "Andrés you remember the buried chest of my father?"

Andrés again sat cross-legged upon the ground.

He looked away to the hills without the flicker of a response.

Then Juana broke in. "Thou stupid! What is an oath but words? And now that *el patron* is dead—thou art freed from it!"

Still the seamed and corrugated old face was as unresponsive as the rabbit skin stretched on the wall above.

"Andrés," Señora Catalina questioned gently, "Dost thou not think my father would wish me to have this gold? I have need for many things; but most of all I wish to build a little chapel here at Cucamonga where the padres may come and minister to us. Would not my father wish this himself?"

The old man suddenly raised his head, the eyes flashed in their red-rimmed caverns, the toothless jaws worked. "Señora," he cried, "I know not. I only know that *el patron* made me swear by all the saints, by the Virgin, and by God himself, that I would never betray where the chest lay." And with shaking fingers he crossed himself. "The master spoke a terrible curse—he cursed me to the blackest and hottest hell—if I broke my word to him!"

The daughter shuddered. Her own memory of her black-browed, fierce old father was but the dimmest of shadows.

"I cannot believe that he meant it so; but since thou so fearest to break thy oath, I will not again ask it," she said.

When her husband returned she told the story to him. He laughed as always: "It is an old woman's tale," he declared, "I heard it long ago and probed old Andrés. I got nothing from him, and I doubt whether there be any truth at all in the story."

But from that day "la Señora Catalina" added a new petition to her prayers.

The years passed on, bringing a multiplicity of children and of debts to the Duprez household. La Señora lost her slight figure and her girlhood sparkle and took on more and more the Madonna look of inward tranquility and grace under heavy burdens. She clung to her hope for the chapel until her husband was obliged to mortgage the rancho to meet the demands of his creditors. That was a most startling blow to her confidence that all must go well to a faithful daughter of the church. After it, she spent more hours than ever before her shrine, praying to the Holy Mother and San Antonio for the salvation of her husband's soul and for help in their temporal affairs.

One night when she had slept but badly, toward morning she dreamed that she saw, moving across the wall of her room, a light which lingered just over a three-cornered crack and was there blotted out. She awoke to brood uneasily over her dream and its interpretation. But when old Juana interpreted, "The light is always good—it will bring you happiness," she was comforted.

The next night the same dream came to her again. She crossed herself and said a little prayer to San Antonio before she examined the wall carefully that day. And then she told the dream to her hubsand. He smiled at her folly and begged her not to burn the house down with her mysterious lights. But when she again saw the light moving slowly over the wall and pausing over the same crack, a few nights later, she awakened her husband, only to hear his grumbling laugh as he turned over for another nap.

But in the morning, in a jovial mood, he led her to the room, crying that he would show how idle was her belief that her dream had meaning. He plunged his knife into the crack. Adobe and plaster rattled in a shower to the floor. A little aperture was revealed, and with an involuntary exclamation of astonishment, Don Carlos thrust in his hand and drew out a small bag—a purse of soft skin, ornamented with feathers—a bit of Indian handiwork. *La Señora* stared with big eyes and pallid face and even the Don suppressed an oath, as he opened the purse and shook out a silver coin and a bit of paper.

*"Madre de Dios!"* he cried after scrutinizing the paper, "what is this?"

With trembling fingers his wife took it and looked at it closely. A few cramped, illegible words and a few unmeaning lines were marked on it—that was all.

Señor Duprez laughed again, a little uneasily however. "Thy dreaming, *mamácita,* is of little avail, if this is the end!"

She turned the paper over helplessly. "It has a meaning," she asserted, " the saints would not have sent such a vision to reveal the old purse if there were no meaning in this paper."

That day she lit two candles before St. Anthony and whispered a prayer for enlightenment with almost every breath. And the answer came. She flew to her husband in triumphant delight.

"It is plain to me now. San Antonio has revealed it that we may pay our debts and build the chapel he has waited for so long! Don't you see? It is the key to the buried chest of my *papá!* See—the straight lines are the mountains—or the hills, perhaps. The ring there is a tree—a large tree—and here to the right this square is the chest—and the words—" she faltered, "I cannot make them out yet; but they tell which tree, without doubt."

"A very necessary piece of information," he observed.

"Yes; but I shall find that out, you will see! San Antonio shall yet have his altar."

"You had better coax Andrés to tell his secret," advised her husband, half-credulous, but still scoffing.

"No," she replied, "I will not tempt Andrés to break his word."

Señora Catalina set about her search for the treasure with a fervor and a system that did credit to her religious zeal and to her common sense. After many prayers and many consultations with Juana and José Juan, and after carefully going over the ground, she determined to begin operations with a certain oak, standing at the base of a high bank. She set forth one morning and after a study of the "key" and the situation, pointed out with her little soft-shod foot the place where excavations should begin. All day she watched the shovelsful of brick-like adobe crumble into dust under the strokes of the perspiring Indians. But no trace of any buried treasure resulted.

Her faith was still strong. The next day she selected a new tree, also near a hill, and repeated the experiment. She kept on until every likely tree within her knowledge had been surrounded by the gashed and torn earth of an abandoned mining project. In the end she was forced to acknowledge that the Virgin and the saints were not yet favorable to the twin desires of her heart—the building of the chapel and the revival of her husband's faith.

As the years slipped by the affairs of Señor Duprez became more and more complicated. At last there came a day when he called his wife into her father's room and, haltingly, with many sighs and oaths, told her that soon they must give up Cucamonga to his creditors and leave to strangers the *hacienda* where she and her children had been born. Then, for almost the first time in her life, Señora Catalina gave way to the passionate temper of her father, as much a part of her rightful heritage as the saintlike patience of her mother. In her rage she permitted herself to see her husband as he was—and to tell him what she saw.

When this revealing moment was past, she did penance for it with many tears and prayers, and tried bravely to resign herself to the inevitable. It was then—in the darkest days of her life, that José Juan announced to her:

"Señora, old Andrés is very sick. In one day he will die."

With only pity in her heart for the old servant and friend of her father, she hastened to the hut. One glance at the shrunken, mask-like face told her that old Andrés was, indeed, at the end of the way.

"Why did you not send for me?" she asked, "I might have given you medicine—I might have sent for the doctor—"

"It is as God wills, señora," the Indian muttered.

"And the priest, Andrés? You are a true son of the church and my father's *compañero.* I will send at once for Padre Tapis."

From his throat came a faint, "As you will."

"Andrés!" she cried in horror, "surely you are not still a heathen? After all the years the good *padres* have taught you! Surely you wish the last rites of the church! Thus shall thy soul go clean before God."

"It is good," he returned, still with indifference.

As she knelt by his side and laid her soft hand over the knotted pile of bones that had once been hands—strong and skillful—the first trace of emotion swept his death-stricken face. He opened his eyes and gasped:

"Señora, is it true that Cucamonga is lost—that you and *los chiquitos* must go away?"

"Yes," she answered sadly, "it is true, my friend, unless we pay much money, and we have not the money to pay."

The dying man suddenly raised himself to a sitting position; his face was quivering, his glazing eyes burned.

"Señora," he cried, "I will tell you—and may the fiends have my soul if they will—I care not. I will tell you—the chest of money lies under a white stone—a flat white stone, near the upper fall in el Cañon del Diablo—José will know—"

He sank back.

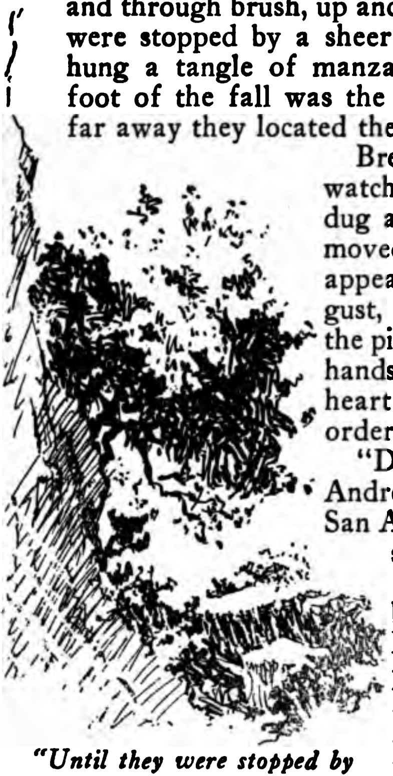
"Oh, Andrés, Andrés!" she cried through her sobs, "indeed my father, and God also, will forgive thee for this! This will save our home! I will never cease to pray for thy soul, and I will have masses said for thee at San Gabriel and in the chapel we will build."

She clasped his cold hands, but there was no response. She took from her throat its rosary and laid it across his lips.

And thus was the soul of Andrés shriven!

When the priest for whom she had sent came, he could only read the burial service over the body, which was taken to San Gabriel and buried in consecrated ground.

The next day la Señora, accompanied by her husband, still protesting—yet eager, and the mayordomo, sought out the spot designated. Over rocks and through brush, up and up they climbed until they were stopped by a sheer wall of rock, over which hung a tangle of manzanita and lilac. Near the foot of the fall was the tree—a live oak, and not far away they located the white stone.



*"Until they were stopped by a sheer wall of rock"*

Breathlessly Señora Catalina watched while the men pried and dug at the stone. When it was moved aside, only gravelly soil appeared. With a word of disgust, Señor Duprez threw down the pick he had used with his own hands. His wife, with sinking heart but with unflinching faith, ordered:

"Dig, José, dig! It is there! Andrés spoke truth, and good San Antonio would not let me be so put upon!"

The mayor-domo again began to shovel vigorously. La Señora murmured a prayer while Señor Duprez again seized a spade. In another moment it splintered into wood. A few more strokes uncovered a wooden box. When they tried to lift the lid, it broke and crumbled in their hands, and they tore it away and tossed it aside, thus revealing a pile of dusty sacks made of untanned hide.

Carlos Duprez lifted one of these and laid it before his wife. With shaking hands she untied the leather thong and emptied upon the ground a heap of silver coins. One by one, in a breathless silence, they emptied each of the sacks and a mound of gold and silver coins rose high on the rough ground.

Then Señora Catalina, still kneeling above the treasure, spoke:

"Dost thou believe now, unbeliever? Did I not tell thee that the Virgin would save my home and that San Antonio would help me find my father's buried gold? Oh," she reached upward with clasped hands and pleading eyes, "wilt thou not now confess thy sins and become again a true son of the church?"

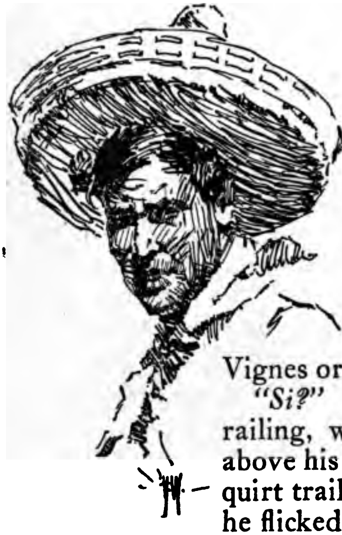
And Don Carlos Duprez, lifting his wife to her feet, kissed her, and said without a trace of mockery:

"By the Holy Virgin and blessed San Antonio, I will!"

"And then we will pay off the debts and build the chapel to San Antonio—it is for this he has so blessed us, I know!" And Señora Catalina crossed herself in an holy ecstasy of triumph.

# The Candle of Good San Antonio

CHONITA Castro stood in the flickering shadow of the passion vine that screened the east end of the *galeria* from the morning sun. Her little head was flung back until the long, smooth braids hung clear of her straight white frock; her eyes were sparkling as the fireflies that lighted the old garden on summer nights. Striking her slender hands together with a clap that was meant to be ferocious, she cried:



"Oh, but I hate those Americanos! I'd die an old maid sooner than marry one—like Manuela Vignes or Mercedes Lugo."

*"Si?"* Pedro, who sat upon the *galeria* railing, with his sombrero pushed back above his silken black curls, and his braided quirt trailing limp in his hand, except when he flicked at a rainbow-winged fly, laughed teasingly. "That is a terrible threat, little one! But it is only a threat. If no *caballero* of thy own blood should seek thy hand, thou'lt soon marry an American or an Englishman."

"S-s-s-st!" Words failed Chonita in her contempt for the accusation. Instead, in childish defiance, she ran her little pink tongue out at her brother. In mock anger he leaped for her and she whirled away, taking refuge behind Tia Stefania, who sat as always in the doorway of her own room.

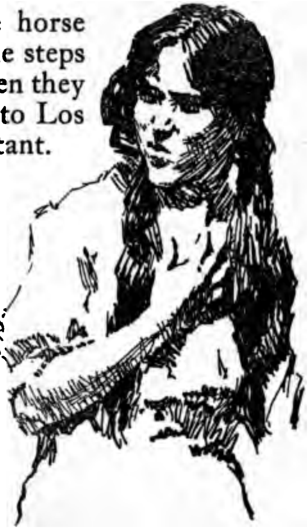
"Aunt," she cried, "Is it not so? Should not a true daughter of California rather die than wed an alien and a heretic?"

"Yes, yes, child," the old woman mumbled. And her eyes, set deep between the strongly-arched white brows and the dark, loosely-hanging cheeks of age that has ceased to count the years, showed their kinship to Chonita's in their flash.

"Yes," the girl repeated with new emphasis, "I am a true daughter of the country and no foreigner shall win my hand!"

"That is right, Chonita," her father, ready for the saddle, paused to say. "Every *señorita* who gives herself—and her heritage—to a stranger, breeds danger for the country."

He sprang lightly to the horse the Indian servant held at the steps and his son followed him; then they galloped away, on the road to Los Angeles, a hundred miles distant.



Chonita after watching them out of sight, picked up her frame and sat down to draw threads, with only Tia Estafania for company. Her mother and all the maids were busy in the *patio* at the rear, stringing the year's supply of peppers. For half an hour the girl patiently and daintily drew out the threads of the delicate fabric, then she flung the work aside and ran lightly down the path to the chapel, sheltered by the drooping veil of a wide-spread weeping willow.

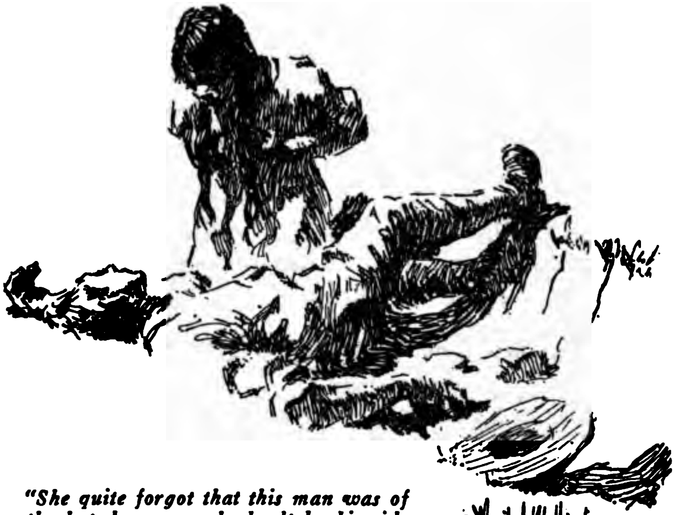
Within the dusky little place, she paused before the shrine of "good San Antonio"—somehow she felt that he understood her restlessness and her longings even better than the Holy Virgin.

As she lit a candle and placed it in the niche at the feet of the little image, she whispered a prayer, "Oh, dear San Antonio, let something happen! I want something new—something—"

She didn't finish the thought even in her own mind—how could she—for she did not know what it was she wanted. The day was long, very long, to the girl, though it was like many another day in *la casa Castro,* and in every other *hacienda* of California at that time. The household was busily sewing, cooking, preparing for the wet—or dry—days ahead; Tia Estafania was drowsing in her chair at the door, and Chonita stitching, or singing to her guitar, or reading the prayer-book given her by the Sisters.

As the westering sun and the ocean breeze of late afternoon replaced the somnolent heat of midday, Chonita tossed aside her work and, springing to her feet, called, "Come Maria, come! We will go and fetch *yerba santa* for *tia* from Flores Cañon—she has again the pain in the breast."

With her own Indian maid beside her, Chonita walked with blithe steps across the crackling *alfileria* of the pasture, climbed the foothill, crowned by giant sycamores, and entered the little cañon, extending back into the low range of hills, beyond which one glimpsed the Sierras. Within the sheltering walls,



*"She quite forgot that this man was of the hated race as she knelt by his side and looked, with pity, into the swollen face."*

the two girls wandered, gathering aromatic bunches of the California cure-all, *yerba santa;* picking a belated blossom here and there; peeking into deserted bird nests, cunningly hidden on the velvet underside of broad leaves.

Chonita, lightly poised upon a boulder, was reaching for a nodding aster far above her head, when her hand fell and her face paled with fright. Down the valley, stumbling and staggering as the blind, came a strange figure—a man, tall, gaunt, his shirt flapping in tatters, his rifle dragging from a lax arm.

Springing from the rock, Chonita, followed by the uncomprehending Maria, fled. Panting and breathless, they fluttered through chaparral and over stony stretches until, glancing back, Chonita saw the man silhouetted sharply against the gray-green bank and then saw him drop suddenly out of sight. She paused.

"*El hombre* falls," she whispered. "He is ill, or starved, or—perhaps dead."

"He is not of ours," Maria spoke. "Let us go home."

"No," Chonita determined. "I think he is an American—and I hate them all—but we must not leave him alone, if he is alive and helpless. We will go back."

With Maria reluctantly following, Chonita swiftly picked her way along the cañon edge until they could look down upon the prostrate form, lying in the dry stream bed. Clutching hands, the two girls cautiously crept near.

The upturned face was burned and blackened by desert heats and winds until it was scarcely human. The bony frame, the tattered, dust-grimed garments, told their own story. As she bent over him and read the signs, Chonita spoke:

"Quick, Maria, run! The man dies for water! Tell Juan to bring water—to come quick! Hurry, hurry! And I will do what I can."

She quite forgot that this man was of the hated race as she knelt by his side and looked with pity into the swollen, unconscious face. Gently, timidly, she began to dabble the dust with her handkerchief from the parched lips and sunken eyelids. With a hand that trembled a little, she pushed back the heavy sombrero and looked with shining eyes upon soft hair, almost gold in color, that lay in dusty rings on a strip of skin as white and soft as her own.

"But he is not so bad to look at," Chonita, who had never before seen an American, except on horseback, told herself.

The man stirred, moaned, and his lips fell open revealing the dry, cracked tongue. Then the girl suddenly remembered the tiny spring in a little side-draw not far away. By chance, there might still be a trickle of water there. She ran.

Tender willow and tall evening primrose bushes marked the water pathway. But there was no drop of water till she reached the head of the pocket. There from the high, rocky bank, came a little ooze; scarcely a drop at a time, it trickled down the moss-grown rock. She held the handkerchief under the dripping until she had gathered all the moisture it would hold. Then she turned back.

The man was sitting up. She paused, her heart pounding. But he did not see her. He was still too dazed to see or think of anything but his own suffering. She watched him blindly groping for his hat and vainly struggling to rise, then she moved quickly forward, and held out the handkerchief, crying, "It is wet, *señor;* it is wet!"

He stared at her in an incredulous wonder, plainly doubting his own senses. And indeed, Chonita, in her white gown, with her great eyes softened by succoring pity, might well be a heavenly vision. She bent and touched his lips with the moist kerchief. He clutched it and squeezed the moisture out, gasping, "Water, water!"

When he had drained the last vestige of moisture from the cloth, he looked up at her with red, famine-stricken eyes. "Where is it—the water?" he gasped.

Chonita pointed the way and held out a strong little hand to help the "Americano" struggle to his feet. He followed her with staggering steps until the sparkle of water caught his eye. Then, with a hoarse cry, he pushed ahead and knelt on the moist ground, tearing it away in handsful to press upon his swollen lips and blistered face, and lapping with his fuzzy tongue the trickling drops on the rock wall.

That night, the stranger—laved within and without—with water, slept under the hospitable roof of the Castro establishment.

It was not until the return of the men of the household the next afternoon, that the young American, clothed and refreshed, sat upon the galeria and related his story. Lost in Death Valley, some of his party had perished. Separating in their search for water, he had wandered alone. When his faithful horse had lain down to rise no more, he had drained its blood to save his own life. After that, he had gone on over burning sands, through rocky cañons and dry hills—he could not tell how long.

It was a story often told in those days, but to Chonita, sitting near and listening with intent eyes to the broken Spanish of the stranger, it was Homeric. When it was ended, she sprang up and, standing with clasped hands before the youth, she cried:

"*Señor,* you should thank 'good San Antonio' for your salvation! You should burn a candle in his honor surely! for it was San Antonio that saved you!"

John Burton, looking down into the earnest, upturned face, smiled and answered in stumbling Spanish: "But, *Señorita,* I think it was you who saved me!"

"No, no! It was San Antonio who told me to go out to Flores Cañon for the *yerba santa,*" she protested.

"I don't know much about the saints and their ways," he admitted. "But if it was your San Antonio that sent you to rescue me, I am ready to thank him—and burn a dozen candles to him!"

She ran into the house and came out with a candle in her hand.

"Come," she beckoned him to follow her, "You shall light it before the shrine and give thanks to the good saint at once."

Before the niche where stood the figure of the mild saint, best loved by all California women, she paused. "That is my candle," she said softly; "it was for that he led me to go out———"

Young Burton took the candle from her hand and held its wick to the flame. He set it before the figure and watched with grave eyes, while she crossed herself and whispered a little prayer. In silence they turned away. Outside the chapel door, she gave him a hasty good-night and ran toward the house, leaving him standing still and looking after her with an adoration that was plainly for the maid rather than the saint.

Within the house, Tia Estafania greeted the girl with a sharp, "Girls never did such unmaidenly things as that, when I was young."

And her mother, who was seldom disturbed from her even way, added, "I thought, Chonita, you abhorred *los Americanos?*"

But it was Pedro whose tormenting laugh sent the blood flying to Chonita's cheeks and brought the hot retort from her lips:

"I hate Americans as always! But that does not prevent me from saving a perishing man—or trying to save his lost soul!"

For a week the stranger lingered in the open-hearted California welcome, regaining strength and courage. Chonita, half regretful of her own impulsive act, and struggling desperately against an interest in this alien, which she would not acknowledge even to herself, had but little to say to him during these days. But always as he talked with the men of his past adventures, or of his determination to stay in this—"God's own country"—he called it, and cast his lot henceforth with Californians, she listened and compared him with the men of the

country whom she had known. And she did not find him wanting. In spite of her carefully nursed dislike for foreigners, the frank smile of the blue eyes, the open words and the simple modesty of this young adventurer from afar, pleased her.

When it came to the last *adios,* as Burton bent over her little hand, she said shyly:

"*Señor,* you will not forget the thanks for 'good San Antonio'? You will sometimes burn a candle to him also?"

"No, *Señorita,*" he spoke softly and looked into her eyes, "I shall never forget your good saint and all he has done for me—" And they both knew that he used the wrong pronouns, because he did not dare to use the right ones.

A year passed away and Señorita Chonita Castro was still a maid, although more than one *caballero* of the handsomest and most desirable of the country had asked for her hand.

Pedro almost daily declared that she was doomed to spinsterhood and that she should retire to a convent. But Chonita only shook her head and laughed, answering the surprise or the reproof of her family with gay wilfulness:

"I like not Don Miguel Onesta—he is too puffy! And I hate Juan Ruiz—he's too sure—he thinks he has but to lift an eyelash to win a girl!"

And then, one day when an early rain had washed the world clean and brought a shadow of green to the fields, John Burton, in the full regalia of a California gentleman and riding his big black stallion like a true son of the country, drew rein before the galeria of *la casa Castro.*

He was warmly welcomed by the family. Rumors had come clear from Los Angeles of the successful American trader, who was already acquiring flocks and herds of his own. Only Chonita, when she had recognized the visitor, had run away without greeting him. It was not until her father called her that she came from her room.

This time, her hair was done high, with a carved, tortoise-shell comb in its meshes; she was wearing a silken gown, of that rich brocade brought from China by the trading vessels; and she received the guest with a grave and formal dignity that might have bewildered any man.

But Burton saw only her eyes. And they were again as sparkling and as fitful as the flare of the fireflies in early dusk. After he had looked into them, he said with a gravity that overmatched hers:

*"Señorita,* I have come to ask your father's permission to offer you my hand. Such, I understand, is the custom of the country. Have I your permission to speak to him?"

She laughed aloud as she turned to her father and asked:

"But, *mi padre,* what do you say to that?"

"You know well my thought, child," Señor Castro replied, "yet—'el Señor Burton' is not like other foreigners. It is for you to answer for yourself. You have always answered all other suitors as you will—in spite of my wishes or the 'custom of the country'."

"Then I say, as always," she turned to Burton with a smile that was wistful in spite of her sureness, "that I can never marry a man who is not of my country—and above all not of my church."

"Well I know that," Burton answered, "and for that I have become a son of the Holy Church and a citizen of California. And, Chonita, I have burned many candles to good San Antonio since I last saw thee—one burns now at Mission San Fernando, where I stopped as I passed by, to put up a prayer for his aid. Surely the good San Antonio speaks for me, now—is it not so?" he pleaded.

And Chonita, putting out her two hands, whispered happily, "Ah! and my candle burns still—and the good saint has heard my prayer, too!"

# The Boss of the Ranch

LITTLE, bent, dark, with a burden in his arms, Juan Flaco rode through the copperish glow that was turning the ranch buildings, the mesas, the wash and the distant hills into a garish, illusive world. He passed the corrals and the house, and paused before the cook-shed in the rear to call in shrill, soft accents, "Luisa! Luisa!"

Jacinta, her black braids drooping over her shoulders and a tin lard pail in her hand, came to the door and stared curiously at the bundle of legs and ears, with blotches of black and white hide and round, empty eyes, blinking feebly in the sunset glare.

"Why that?" she asked.

"Where is Luisa?" the old man demanded.

The mother began to complain querulously that Luisa was down by the *zanja,* or off up the *barranca,* or—

Without waiting for the end of her outpouring, Juan turned and rode along the narrow path across the green strip of alfalfa which contrasted with the surrounding dry, dead browns. He turned when he reached the ditch of limpid, softly whispering water, and rode up the arroyo toward the big cottonwood.

A little girl lay stretched out upon the ground underneath the tree, her elbows deep in sand, her hands supporting her chin, her eyes set upon the fading sheets of gold and scarlet that were flung out above the Lomas Negras. At the scuffle of approaching hoof-beats she sprang to her feet and started toward Juan. She was a slender, straight-limbed child, with long, narrowing eyes and a complexion that was neither white nor brown nor yellow, but a mingling of all three in a transparency through which the red blood glowed.

The old man dismounted and put the calf down upon the ground. It lay inert, its legs like sticks, its sides feebly fluttering, its eyes half-closed.

"Ah!" Luisa gasped, as she fell upon her knees and began to stroke the white-starred face. Juan told her that the little creature had lost its mother, and was so nearly starved that it would probably die, too. "But," he finished, "if life can be kept in the little thing you can do it, Luisa, and it shall be your calf."

"My very own?" she demanded rapturously. "May I keep it and play with it?"

He nodded assent, as he saw the eager shining of her eyes, the happy smile that lighted up the little yearning face. He had brought the maverick home, hoping it might help Luisa to forget her latest tragedy.

She was a lonely child, only at ease with her old friend, Juan. By his side she chatted and played and sang happily, while he mended saddles or bridles and braided riatas under the high roof of the corral shed. But she listened with downcast eyes to the rough kindliness of the other men on the ranch, and shrank alike from her mother's coarse levity or outbursts of anger. Her only playmates were the mongrel terrier, Pimiento, which trotted at her heels with one ear perpetually cocked for a kind word and one eye ever watchful for a bone, and old Tim, the three-legged, one-eyed black cat—the oldest appurtenance of the Short Stop Rancho. Sometimes she tamed wild things—a rabbit, a ground-squirrel, and last of all a fawn that Dill McGinnis, the foreman, had brought home to her. But the doe had grown up and one night ran away, leaving Luisa heart-broken.

Juan went to beg fresh milk of Hank. Luisa held the calf's head while Juan acted as foster-mother, and after much splashing and nuzzling, the little creature revived enough to suckle—at first feebly, then hungrily. After the feeding was over, Juan found a box and filled it with hay, and they put the infant to bed behind Jacinta's shack.

In the soft darkness of the moonless night, Luisa lingered over her charge until her mother commanded her to bed. Even then she was too full of anxious care and joyous hope to fall asleep at once. When she heard a faint bleat, she slipped from her mother's side and crept round the house to the cradle. There she whispered soothing words and stroked and caressed until her eyes grew too heavy to resist sleep.

She was up with the first dawn to help Juan feed the calf. Then they carried it down to the big cottonwood in the arroyo, and she spent the day in offering the uncertain but ever-seeking mouth water, milk and grass. She set up brush in the sand to shelter the helpless creature from wind and sun; and she explained fondly to the calf and to Pimiento that they were both her very own and must be good friends.

For the first two days the stray remained so flat-sided and tottery on its sprawly legs that Juan half-hoped, half-feared that it might die. But when it began to do cake-walks and Highland flings with its clumsy limbs and to bunt the milk-pail out of his hands, he was reassured. Soon the calf became so frisky that Luisa gravely named it "El Tonto," "because he is such a fool," she explained.

The maverick, once it got a start, grew like a wild gourd-vine. Soon he was too strong for Luisa's little hands. One day, when she attempted to change his feeding-place, he jerked the rope from her and dashed away. She followed, making clutches at the dragging rope, which caught on brush and rocks. But the calf bounded on until he reached the alfalfa. There he paused to snatch mouthfuls, and she approached, coaxing and calling while she reached for the rope. She caught him once, but he leaped away and bounded on through the garden, round the buildings, across *el patron's* hardly won bit of lawn, finally trampling one of her mother's latest brood of chickens to death. Jacinta joined in the chase and panted heavily in his wake, denouncing the brute with every picturesque epithet in her vocabulary, until Luisa succeeded in beguiling the errant with a pan of skim milk into captivity. Then she wept silently over the mangled chicken.

That night Juan took the calf farther up the arroyo, and warned Luisa never again to loosen the stake-rope. After this she patiently packed water and milk to his lordship and surreptitiously gathered alfalfa from the edges of the patch to tempt his appetite. The calf repaid her devotion by bawling so strenuously when she left him alone that she lived in constant dread lest *el patron* should hear his noise and order his banishment.

But a lusty maverick cannot be blamed for tiring of the round permitted by a twenty-foot stake-rope.

One day El Tonto jerked his stake-pin out of the ground, and mad with the joy of freedom, dashed away at a gait that left Luisa hopelessly in the rear.

The foreman happened to ride in while the confusion was at its wildest. He tossed a riata over the calf's head and dragged it headlong toward the corral, swearing that the brute was ready for veal. But when he turned to Luisa's little figure, with its limp braids, and starchless blue calico hanging in dejected lines about her, and saw the anxious, tear-stained face, he hauled the calf back down to the arroyo and tied it securely to a tree that it could not possibly pull up.

The child followed him, and in her gratitude overcame her shyness enough to say, "*Gracias Señor Dill, muchas gracias!* El Tonto will not again break loose, and," she hesitated, embarrassed, "*el patron*—will he be—mad?"

Dill smiled. "Are you going to tell him about it?" he asked. And at her horrified expression, he laughed aloud and assured her, "I'll not tell him."

To her the "boss," Arthur Malcolm, represented power and authority. At his word men went hither and yon; at his beck cattle were changed from range to range; at his nod old Juan sat under the shed roof or rode away. She looked up to this autocrat with timorous awe, as a being to be feared—and avoided.

Yet Malcolm was the most unasssuming of men, differing outwardly from the other men on the place only by the soft black beard, the white skin underneath his hat brim, and the tautness and poise of the man of brain. When he had come to the ranch, two years before, he had been attracted by the silent, wistful-eyed child, and often brought home packages of candy or popcorn for her. But she accepted his gifts with such shrinking hands and so palpably slipped to one side when she saw him approaching that he had been annoyed and had ceased to take notice of her.

The calf chose the hours of darkness for his next escapade. The dogs barked intermittently all night; the broncos sniffed and shifted uneasily in their corral; the Jerseys bawled and snorted. Juan Flaco got up once or twice and looked about to find the cause of the disturbance. The foreman also went the round of the corrals, gun in hand. But neither of them discovered the small animal which, after a dash across the *mesa,* had pranced and danced about the corrals, and finally settled itself for an epicurean feast upon the tender, juicy, green blue-grass of the lawn—such grass as was to be found nowhere else, in Pima County, at least. And when he was full, El Tonto lay down upon the sacred lawn for a well-earned repose.

Juan discovered the calf, and hustled it back to the arroyo, where he tied it with a new inch rope. But when Mr. Malcolm found his cherished lawn looking like a very ragged and moth-eaten army blanket, he was angry.

When he had appeared as the new owner of the Short Stop, he had left details to the foreman and his employés; but he had brought a business sense and a clean-cut judgment to the affairs of the ranch that had already placed it on a better paying basis than any other place of its size in southern Arizona. He had stood the test of close association with his men, too. Yet the lawn, like the Jerseys and the alfalfa patch, was a "new-fangled proposition" that the cow-punchers looked upon as a weakness.

When the boss presented himself and asked hotly what had happened to his lawn, there was a significant silence, until Dill remarked, with great deliberation and apparent hesitation, that "it looked like it had been bitten."

"What bit it?" Malcolm demanded. "That's what I asked you."

"Looks like a dog might 'a' worried it," Dill suggested, then added, reluctantly, "I reckon it was that calf——"

"What calf?"

"Luisa's calf," Dill admitted.

"Where did Luisa get the calf? How did it come on the place?"

"Ask old Juan Flaco," Dill responded, unwillingly.

Leaving orders for the old man to be sent to him, Malcolm went back to the house and sat down on the porch, overlooking the ruin. The *vaquero* came presently and stood respectfully before his employer, although there was a suppressed smile in his eyes as he glanced from the uprooted and trampled lawn to the man's flushed face. Turning his old sombrero in his fingers, he spoke before Malcolm could begin:

"I have made a mistake, *señor*. I see it now. I should not have given the calf to Luisa—I should have left it to die. But—I did not think that it would make such trouble——"

"That's all right, Juan," Malcolm declared, mollified by the frank avowal. "Just take the calf back to the range now—that's all."

With a troubled face Juan said that the animal was still too young to make its way on the range alone. "And," he added, "I gave the calf to Luisa. She like him. She feel very bad he go die now."

"I can't help that. The beast is a nuisance about the place and—I won't have it. Let it die if it will! Here, give the girl this," and he drew a five-dollar gold piece from his pocket. "That'll make it all right with her."

Juan shook his head doubtfully, but he took the coin and turned toward the arroyo. He found Luisa kneeling before El Tonto, and with many gentle taps and flashing gestures, pouring out reproof and warning upon his silly head.

She looked up as Juan paused by her side, and said, despairingly, "He is such a fool! He will not understand that it is good for him to be tied up with a rope!"

"That is because he is only a calf, after all, Luisa," old Juan said, soberly. "But, little one, the master says that now he must go to the range. He is angry that his bit of grass is disturbed."

"But El Tonto will starve on the range!" she cried, in dismay. "There is little feed on the range now—for the big cattle—I heard Señor Dill say it!"

"But the calf has a good nose for the feed—he will find it," Juan tried to assure her; "and look, Luisa, Señor Malcolm sends this—five dollars in gold—it is much money!" and he held out the coin enticingly.

With her arms about El Tonto's neck, she scarcely glanced through her tears at the gold. What was it to her? It could not be petted and waited upon.

"Oh," she sobbed, as the fulness of her grief dawned upon her, "I will not let my Tonto go! He will starve to death now! When he is big—when the rains come—then I will let him go to the range. But now—to starve—my *pobrecito!* I will not let him go!" and she stood up, still tearful, but defiant. "I will take him away up the arroyo. He shall not again eat *el patron's* little grass."

All Juan's half-hearted protests were unavailing. She started away, and he went slowly back to the house and returned the money to Malcolm, explaining Luisa's feeling. "I will see that the creature does not again trouble you, señor," he volunteered. "I will make one corral for him——"

"You will do nothing of the sort!" retorted his employer. "Who is boss of this ranch, anyhow? Take that calf back to the range at once, Juan. It has done damage enough."

Juan spoke gently. "I gave the calf to the little one, señor; I cannot take him away from her when she cry——"

"You refuse to take that calf back to the herd?"

"Yes, señor. I will go from here." Juan turned and walked slowly toward the corrals. There he made a bundle of his blankets and few belongings, saddled his pony, and with a few words to Dill, rode away from the place that had been his home for five years.

It might have seemed a small thing to lose the services of this old Mexican. But the bronco was yet to find that Juan Flaco could not "gentle," and the man to discover whom Juan Flaco could not out-tire in the saddle. And he was not only valuable as a *vaquero;* he was master of simple crafts, and could make and mend all sorts of horse-gear. He knew the use of nature's remedies, too, and could bind a wound or heal lacerated flesh better than a graduated veterinarian.

"I sure hate to see old Juan go," the foreman said, regretfully.

"So do I," Malcolm replied, "but he discharged himself. See that some of the other men take that calf back to the herd."

"That's a mighty promising little steer, Mr. Malcolm," Dill ventured. "It seems a pity to lose it just when it's got a good start. A few weeks more and—it might make a go of it on the range."

"An animal that can do a job of eating like that ought to be able to live on the range now," Malcolm answered, dryly.

"Yes," Dill admitted, meekly, "but then—there ain't any blue-grass done up in tissue-paper and sprinkled with cologne for him to run across out on the range."

Malcolm flushed angrily, and said, with emphasis, "You have heard my orders!"

"Yes, but I reckon you better give them orders to your next foreman," and Dill wheeled and walked away. For a moment Malcolm stared in blank surprise at the foreman's retreating figure, which was aggressively indifferent in its stalwart uprightness, and listened unconsciously to the defiant clink of the departing spurs. Then his good sense came to the rescue, and he called:

"Hold on, Dill! Don't let us quarrel over that measly calf. I don't want to be unreasonable——"

"That's all right," Dill responded, heartily, as he turned back. "I was too uppish myself."

"But," the boss went on, "you can see—the beast would be a constant trouble. And—it'll be no easier for the girl later on. We might as well have it over with."

"Yes, I s'pose it's got to be," Dill admitted.

Hank was the only man about the corrals. He listened to the orders with a scowl. "I've a good mind to follow old Juan's lead," he asserted. "That poor kid ain't only jest got off her mournin' fer that ungrateful doe. An' now she'll be plumb heartbroke with the bull calf and old Juan both gone at one whack!"

"She'll live through it," Dill stated, wisely. "She's one o' the kind o' females that's born to suffer."

Hank attempted strategy. He went to the cookshed and told Jacinta of his errand. She was overjoyed that the calf was to be removed, and consented to call Luisa and keep her in the house until El Tonto had taken his departure. But the girl did not answer her mother's call.

The "puncher" rode up the arroyo, following tracks in the sand, until he came in sight of a little procession—the black-and-white calf ambling carelessly along, Pimiento chasing inconsequently after lizards, and Luisa proceeding warily, for about her waist the girl had tied the calf's rope, and her movements were controlled by the vagaries of El Tonto.

The man uttered an exclamation as he realized what might happen if the calf took it into his "fool head to *vamos*." He rode on as quietly as possible. but when Pimiento ran back to yelp a welcome, El Tonto tossed his heels and bolted.

Luisa was jerked from her feet and dragged ruthlessly over sand and rocks, toward a clump of cactus. Hank swung his lariat and brought the calf to the ground. With anxious questions and exclamations, he hastily released the child from the rope. She scrambled to her feet, wiped the dust from her scratched face with her skirt, and looked defiance at her rescuer.

"Now look here, Luisa," he began, speaking in Spanish, "don't you ever hitch yourself to that calf again! Why, gracious, girl, you might have been killed! That calf would have dragged you to death in no time if I hadn't been here."

Luisa listened to his excited eloquence with indifferent silence, and he fell into embarrassment as he tried to fix upon his next move.

"Your mother is looking for you, Luisa. Hadn't you better go and see what she wants?" he insinuated.

"It doesn't matter," she answered, carelessly, then added with decision, "I will tie El Tonto to that tree yonder."

"I am sorry, Luisa," Hank said, "but I've got to take him with me to the range."

She turned away without another word and went over to the little beast. Bending down, she kissed the white star in its forehead; then she ran quickly away up the arroyo. Hank was greatly relieved until he caught a glimpse of her convulsed face and trembling lips. Then he jerked the calf away after him.

Far up the *barranca,* hidden away between two big boulders, Luisa lay on her face and wept until, exhausted by the storm of grief and anger, she fell asleep. There her mother found her toward night, and waked her with a sharp cry of mingled relief and wrath. With tear-dimmed eyes and with misery expressed in her shrinking figure, the little girl followed Jacinta back to the ranch and went to her usual task of gathering eggs with a lifeless step that betokened submission, without resignation.

The next day she sat behind the cook-shed and picked over *frijoles* and strung red peppers at her mother's will, while her thoughts were picturing El Tonto in the throes of thirst and starvation. Her only consolation was her belief that Juan was on the range and might succor her pet. That night she slipped up to Dill and shyly asked when Juan would return.

Dill compromised. "Oh, he'll be along in a day or two," and she glided away.

"It is mighty tough on little Luisa," the foreman observed, "two friends at once—all she had. And I don't know but she'll miss old Juan more than the steer, when she finds he's really gone."

The child had been a lonely little figure, at best, as she roamed about the place, playing with her pets or lingering by old Juan's side. But now there was a pathos in her listless, aimless loneliness that appealed to every man on the ranch. When he caught a glimpse of her, strolling laggingly down the path through the alfalfa, one morning as he rode away to town, Malcolm felt uncomfortably guilty, and regretted his own impatience.

The little girl was, indeed, struggling with a great problem. Through persistent questioning of Jacinta, she had learned at last that Juan had gone away from the ranch for good because he would not take her calf back to the range. She felt that she was responsible for his going, and that she must bring him back. It was quite clear in her mind now that she would have chosen her old friend rather than El Tonto had she known that the choice must be made. And *el patron* must know this; only through his word could Juan come back. She must tell him—she must speak to him herself; thus all the long day Luisa's tangled little thoughts ran on.

Toward evening she went slowly over the hill and down the road. When she saw the big black horse and its rider looming against the sky-line, her knees trembled and her face grew whiter; but she kept steadily on until she stood beside the horse and looked upward into Malcolm's surprised face. Pitying the child's evident struggle, he said, encouragingly, "Well, Luisa, what is it?"

"O señor—I want Juan back!" she began, with a gasp. "He is not bad—he is good; he——" In her eagerness words were lost, but her eyes spoke appealingly.

"I know, Luisa," Malcolm said, "but I told Juan to do something, and Juan would not do it. My men must obey my orders."

"It was for me—he not take El Tonto," she explained, breathlessly, "and I not know! I no let him go! I let El Tonto go! Señor, I want Juan back!" she pleaded. Then, compellingly, "He mus' come back!" Her fear was forgotten, and she clutched the drooping bridle-rein.

The ranch owner looked down thoughtfully into the fiercely eager eyes; then he said, with sudden decision, "All right, Luisa. Juan shall come back."

"Oh—*es bueno—es bueno!*" she cried, while her hands clasped and her face thrilled and glowed with joyful relief. Malcolm incautiously continued, "And you'll not mind about the calf any more, Luisa?"

Her bright face clouded instantly. "I like El Tonto—I no like him to die—for feed—for water," —tears wavered in her eyes and her voice shook, yet she went on resolutely,—"but—if Juan come back here—it is—good——"

"Your calf shall not die, child! Juan shall make a corral for it and we will bring it back from the range."

Malcolm spoke impulsively, and as he watched her incredulous wonder change into glad conviction, he swung himself from the saddle and, lifting the trembling little figure to his seat, said, as he gave her the bridle, "You are the boss of the ranch, after all, Luisa."

# The Departure of José Juan

---

THE valley below was a sea of mist in palest pinks and softest blues, shading into deepest purples, with here and there a touch of crimson on the mountain tops beyond.

Victor Henshaw was looking straight down into it, yet he saw nothing of all the beauty spread before him. He was even unconscious that his wiry little team had dropped from their accustomed brisk trot into a slow walk, while the light buckboard rattled over stones, or ground dismally through the sandy wash, quite unnoticed by its occupant.

At last the horses, missing the usually urgent hand of their driver, stopped short at the foot of a steep pitch. Then the young man aroused himself with the manner of one who has come to an important decision and, with a word to the team, as he picked up his whip and tightened the lines, he announced:

"I'll try it! That will settle it, at any rate."

The road dipped down into the valley now; the wheels rolled smoothly, while the young man carelessly trilled the words of a Spanish love ballad—handed down from faraway ancestors—and startled rabbits leaped away through the sagebrush and humming birds, in their nests under the sycamore leaves, softly stirred and twittered in response. Presently he stopped singing to repeat:

"Yes, I'll try my chance this very night. I may 'get left'—but a man can't help his birth."

He soon turned into a long avenue and drove between orderly rows of orange and lemon trees on either side of the way. When he reached one of the thriftiest of the young orchards on the shaded street, with ripening gold gleaming through the soft dusk from every branch, he swung his team into the driveway, passed the tiny California house, and stopped before a barn that towered above the residence.

Bacon and *frijoles* were sputtering on the stove, and an old man—"Mexican," in the careless diction of his neighbors, a Californian by all rights, was laying the table.

"Thou art early tonight," he said in Spanish, with a welcoming smile.

"Yes," Victor answered in English, as he took his place at the table, "I must go again."

"To see *la bonita Americana,* eh?" José Juan questioned, and Victor, with a conscious smile, nodded assent.

"Thou wilt be bringing *la señorita* home with thee some day?" There was wistfulness in the question now.

Victor turned from the little mirror before which he was preparing to shave. "I am going to ask her to marry me, tonight, uncle." He spoke gravely, half-realizing that he had come to the turning point. "And she—probably she will laugh at me and tell me I forget myself—that my mother was 'Mexican' and my grandmother——"

He came to pause as the old man rose to his feet, his head up, his eyes ablaze. "Thy grandmother Indian—and I—thy uncle. Art thou ashamed of us, boy?" he demanded, sternly. "And," he went on, "hast thou forgotten that thy grandfather was Señor José Juan Martinez—a truer gentleman than ever

Señorita Burns looked upon! And thy grandmother's father was a man not without honor, not only with his own people, but with the padres and the Spanish! And I," his voice was trembling now, "I have tried to be worthy of my heritage. Art ashamed of us, now, lad?"

The young man, with a little gesture as of throwing something away from him, spoke now in Spanish. "No; I am not ashamed, my uncle! I know my ancestors were brave men—that my mother and my grandmother were good women. And thou—I have known no better man than José Juan Martinez, the son. But—she doesn't know—she cannot understand. Still, she must take me as I am—or leave me, as she chooses."

"Never fear," the older man spoke grimly, "she will not leave thee. Why should she? Thou art an American, as she is. You work and you save, as Americans do. You have your orange grove and your bee *rancho*—not many can offer a woman more. And, thou art a good lad, Victor—and well to look upon." There was tenderness in voice and face.

The boy cast a laughing glance into the mirror. "You had better come with me, José Juan. If you were to tell over my virtues to Miss Burns she would surely say 'yes.' "

His uncle shook his head, decisively. "The little *Americana* would not wish to see me. When she comes, I will go away. My ways are not her ways. It will be better for me to go——"

"Thou art talking nonsense," Victor interrupted sharply. "My home is your home always. You are my only kinsman—what would have become of me but for you? Do you think I have forgotten that you have been both father and mother to me, José Juan?"

The downcast face flushed with a sudden radiance. Sometimes of late he had almost feared the boy had forgotten. José Juan watched his nephew complete his careful toilet with a smile that was pathetic in its happiness and pride.

"Leave thee, Victor," he repeated, as the young fellow turned from the glass for the last time, "any woman might be proud to win thee!"

But when his nephew had gone, José Juan's smile faded and he sat motionless for a long time. Since he had held the little child in his arms for the last look into its mother's face, his life had centered in this boy. When the New England instincts and training of the father had overcome the spirit of adventure that had led him to the Coast and to a marriage which he plainly regretted, he had made what he considered a suitable provision for the child, turned it over to its uncle, and gone back to the land of his parents. José Juan had rejoiced with his whole heart at the departure of this alien brother-in-law. Thenceforth his sister's son was all his own, and he had no other thought or care. The boy had accepted his uncle's devotion as a matter of course; but he had repaid it with his love and confidence—they had always been close friends and comrades. But now—things would be different.

"*La Americana* will not wish me," the old man repeatedly sadly. "My ways are not the ways of her people—and I am too old to learn anew. It will be better that I go away. She might not wish her friends to know that I am Victor's uncle—that would make unhappiness in the home—unhappiness such as his mother knew. I will go away." And presently he added, "I will go now—tonight. That will be the best for the boy."

Having come to a decision, José Juan Martinez was not one to delay. He rose and began making his preparations. From a little canvas bag he emptied gold pieces and counted them. He rolled his blankets and put together a few provisions. When all was ready, he went into Victor's bedroom and opened a drawer. From a number of photographs he selected three—one of the child on a little black pony that he himself had broken and presented; another of the boy at eighteen, his sombrero set far back on his waving hair, and a smile of boyish complacence on his handsome face; and one of the young man in the conventional best suit of the American youth. These he wrapped carefully and placed in his pocket.

After his horse was saddled and packed, he came back into the house. Bringing out paper and pen, he wrote slowly, painfully:

"My beloved son—I go away, and I will not come back again. It is best so. You are an American—you will live as your father and your wife. It is right. But I am not an American. I do not desire it. It is best for both that I go away. I love you always. José Juan Martinez."

He laid the note on the table and went out. But presently he returned and, taking his letter, placed it underneath his pillow. Then the old man rode away into the darkness of night.

At that same moment, Victor, leaping into his saddle, pressed his horse into a furious gallop. She was his—that dainty little white girl—the American

—she had promised to be his wife—had said that she loved him!

Catching his hat from his head, he waved it in the air, while he uttered a voiceless shout of exultation. But his Latin effervescence soon yielded to his cooler English blood, to which was added a touch of the stoicism of his 'Native' ancestry. He drew his horse to a walk and began to think coolly and collectedly.

His marriage to the American girl would make a great change in his life. It was true he was an American citizen; he had been educated in the public schools, he spoke the English language. Yet he was alien at heart—he thought still in Spanish. And it was José Juan who had made his home and created his ideals. From now on he must think English as well as speak it; he must be an American in his home, as well as abroad.

His uncle had been right—he could provide well for his wife. He must build a new house in the orange grove — a real 'back-East' house, she had stipulated. He remembered with a little pang of mingled joy and pain that she had looked into his eyes and cried: "We will be so happy there together —just we two." And he had not spoken of José Juan —had not told her that it must be three——.

"But I will tell her, next time," he thought, "she cannot object when I tell her how he has always loved and cared for me."

The touch of her hands, of her lips, came back to him, and he went into the house with something of his first exhilaration upon him. His first impulse was to waken José Juan and tell him how true a prophet he had been—let him share in his joy. But with his hand upon the door, he was arrested by the fatal second thought and, smiling at his own foolishness, he went quietly to bed.

He was disappointed in the morning at his uncle's absence, but not alarmed. The old man frequently arose early to spend the day in the hills hunting, or visiting old friends. But on the second morning an unwontedness about the little room, when he looked to see if by chance his uncle had come in late, struck the young man. A hasty examination revealed the note under the pillow.

"Does he think I will let him go?" Victor cried, when he had read it. "Foolish old José Juan! He has probably gone to Felipe's. I will ride over and bring him home."

For two weeks Victor spent the greater part of his time in the saddle. He visited every settlement, every rancho, where Spanish-speaking people or Indians remained. He was not alone in his search. José Juan Martinez had been loved and honored by his people. Every retreat, every mountain trail was carefully gone over. There were rumors—only rumors—of a solitary horseman, striking toward the desert.

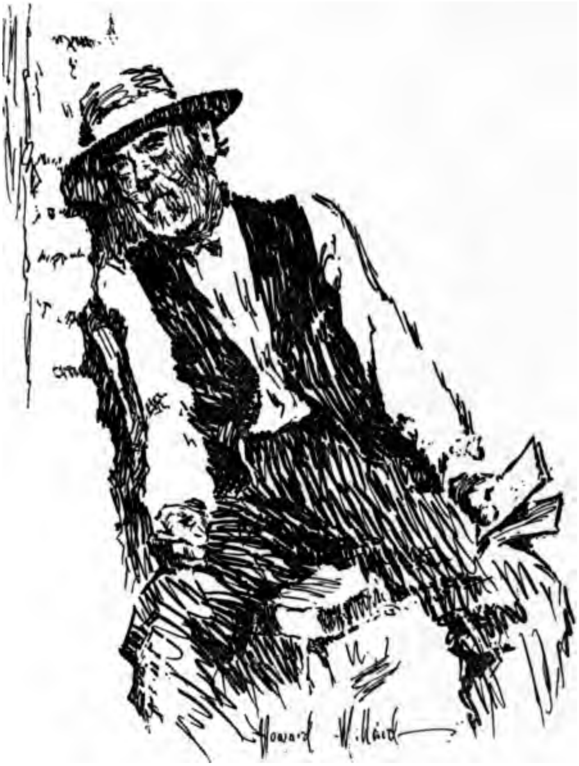
The county constabulary and private detectives also followed the trail of José Juan Martinez to the desert. But there it was lost in the drifting sands. No trace of the missing man was found beyond.

At last Victor gave over the search. "He will come back—he cannot stay away—unless—" And not even his sweetheart could comfort him when he thought of what might well be. As the months passed he still watched and waited for the sound of the well loved voice. But gradually hope died. In the interest of building the new house, in the joy of his honeymoon, the happiness of the new life with his fair young wife, and in the pride of first fatherhood, the memory of José Juan faded at last from grief to a lingering regret.

* * * * * * *

Under the Arizona sun an old man still sits by the door of his 'dobe hut and smokes and dreams. In the season, he cares for his little patch of beans and peas. Occasionally he does odd jobs for the neighboring ranchers, and they remark that "ol' Pedro must 'a' been a mighty good horseman in his day."

But for the most part he sits by his door. Sometimes he brings out three pictures and lays them side by side before him. They are so faded and worn that the dim old eyes can scarcely discern the loved features now; but José Juan looks at each and sees the face that lives in his memory unfaded. And then he turns his eyes to the west and smokes and dreams again.


Howard Willard

*"And then he turns his eyes to the west and smokes and dreams again."*

# The Grave of Señora Valdez

SEÑORA CONCEPCION VALDEZ was dead. For ninety long years life had lingered, and now it had vanished from the shriveled, worn little body so quietly, so imperceptibly, that the group about the bedside could not tell when the spirit passed and the woman became clay.

There was a long silence after the last faint murmur, the last soft sigh. Then old Pablo bent over the still face and listened intently. He lifted his head to motion to Anita Castro, and she went softly out of the room, to come back with a tiny white feather in her hand. With shaking fingers Pablo laid it across the stiff lips. There was no faintest flutter of the fragile thing—they all knew beyond dispute—that the end had come.

The two daughters, the last of the Valdez race, bowed their heads in the first bitter grief that loss of loved ones brings to all. Joaquina, rocking herself to and fro and calling upon the saints and the Virgin for help, wept aloud. But Concepcion knelt quietly, her little, dark face almost as drawn and wrinkled as that of the dead, and clasped the cold fingers tight in her own, while she whispered over and over again, in her own tongue:

"My mother is dead—and I cannot live without her—my mother is dead—and I cannot live without her——"

For forty years she and her mother had never been separated, had shared every feeling, every experience. It was different with Joaquina—she had been away to the convent; and had visited friends in many places—she had seen the world. But Concepcion had seldom been out of sight of this house where she was born. Here she and her mother had watched one after another of the family pass away; together they had looked on while old friends and neighbors were driven out, or pushed aside, by a strange people. Sitting quietly on their rose shaded *galeria,* or by their blazing logs, they had seen the free, happy life of Spanish California die out before the engulfing Anglo-Saxon civilization. When their own rich holdings had been decreed no longer their own—"at Washington," they were told—the two women had wept together in helpless, hopeless wonder.

And now the mother was dead and the daughter was left behind. Concepcion had no tears; stunned by terror of the years to come, she gazed into the face that was so peaceful now, after all its troubles, until Anita came and with gentle touch, lifted her and led her from the room.

"*Mi madre* must not be laid in that field up there," Joaquina was saying earnestly; "she must be laid in holy ground—is it not so, Concepcion? Did she not always say that she must be buried in consecrated ground?"

"Yes," Concepcion answered, without lifting her head from the table, "she must be laid in the churchyard and have the priest and the masses."

"Yes," Joaquina assented, "and she must have a fine, black coffin, too—she must be buried as befits a Valdez!"

Señor Don Ignacio Valdez had been dead so many years that his memory was but little more than a tradition to these last of his children; but they never forgot that they were his daughters. And Joaquina, at least, always remembered that it was the King of Spain himself who had signed the paper granting "Rancho del Potrero" to "his loyal servant, Valdez."

"Ah!" she cried, clasping her hands, "if we had now but a little part of that which is our own—but a little part—but, we have nothing, now—nothing at all! There are no more silks and laces, even, in the chests. Where shall we find the money, Concepcion? We must have money for *mamácita.*"

Concepcion said nothing, and old Pablo sadly shook his head. Then José Garcia, who posed as the business and legal adviser of his people, spoke wisely:

"You will have to mortgage your homestead to get the money—that is the only way."

"Mortgage? What is that?" Joaquina questioned, suspiciously—Garcia was not of her class.

After many words and many questions, Joaquina spoke, still doubtful, "I see—we get money; but if we pay it not back again we lose our home. Shall it be so, Concepcion?"

"How can we lose our home?" the older woman asked. "Did not the great men at Washington say this little piece of land was ours for always?"

There were further explanations, and at last Joaquina said, confidently, "We will pay the money back. I will sew and Concha will raise many fowls and Pablo will have the fine crop of barley next year. It will be all right."

In the end, Garcia went with the sisters to the new town, with its cheap, frame houses, its brick-veneer stores, and its tiresome rows of new-set trees, that had sprung up, like some huge, ugly weed patch, on the wide sweep of the mesa there below the "Potrero." After much talk and many wearisome formalities, money was placed in their hands. They knew little of the rest; but the money would pay for the coffin and the mourning, and the priest would require money for the burial and the masses—and what mattered else, now?

Señor Valdez, and his sons, had been carried to San Luis Rey and buried in the Mission graveyard beside the high-born lady who had survived but a few years of life in the new world. The second wife had been proud to bear the children of Señor Valdez and to be known by his name; but she had never dreamed of ranking with the first wife. Not even Concepcion thought of placing her there.

The forlorn little procession, dusty and spent with fatigue, after the slow drive of thirty miles over rough roads, stopped before the crumbling adobe wall of a neglected *campo santo,*—the nearest consecrated ground. But the casket was satin-lined the priest read the burial service and promised an extra mass; and among the stained and rotting, whitewashed crosses and slabs, there were a few imposing stones, bearing once proud names,—the daughters turned homeward, feeling that they had done well.

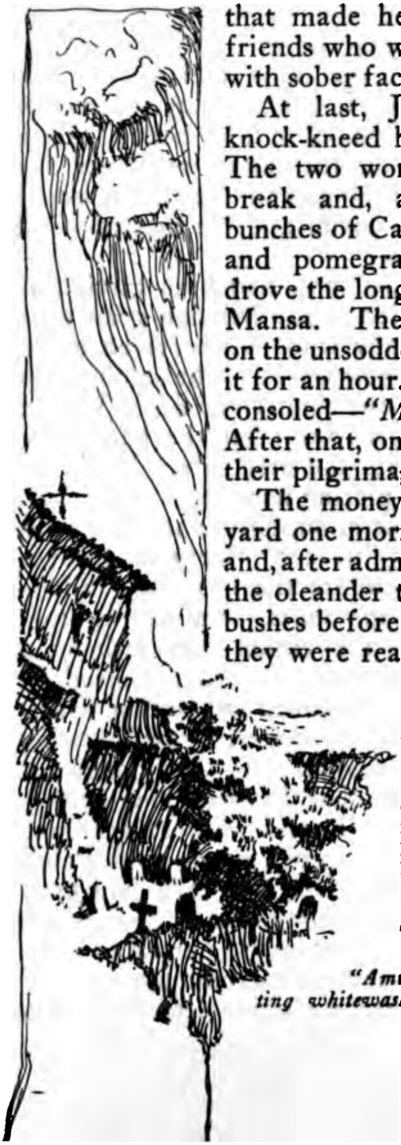
Dreary days followed. The sisters were left alone with their memories, in the old *casa.* Old Pablo the faithful servitor and friend of years, had been sorely stricken with rheumatism and had gone to his daughter's home. Concepcion sobbed herself to sleep at nights, because she was "so lonesome for *mamá,*" and went about her daily tasks with a settled sadness that made her sister and the few friends who were left look after her with sober faces.

At last, Joaquina borrowed a knock-kneed horse and an old cart. The two women rose before daybreak and, after gathering great bunches of Castilian roses, oleanders and pomegranate blossoms, they drove the long, weary miles to Agua Mansa. There they laid the flowers on the unsodded grave and sat beside it for an hour. But Concepcion was consoled—"*Mamá* knew," she said. After that, once a month, they made their pilgrimage.

The money-lender drove into the yard one morning, six months later, and, after admiring the great peppers, the oleander trees and pomegranate bushes before the house, he asked if they were ready to pay the interest.

"In'trus?" Joaquina repeated, blankly; "what is that in'trus?"

In his best mixture of English and Spanish, he tried to make it clear; but she only shook her head and declared firmly, "In



*"Among the stained and rotting whitewashed crosses and slabs,"*

one year the paper said—then we pay the money."

He had to be content with reminding her, as he lifted his reins, that the place would become his property, if the money were not paid when the year was up. Joaquina shook her clenched hands after him as he drove away, and cried, despairingly, in answer to her sister's perplexed questions, "We shall not have that money to pay him. We shall have to lose our home!"

She had felt for some time that they should never be able to pay back the two hundred dollars they had borrowed. There had been no barley crop at all this year. She had found little sewing to do. The new settlers who had homesteaded the acres that had once belonged to their rancho knew little and cared less about the two shrinking, black-robed women they sometimes saw pass to the postoffice and store. And Concepcion was not so spry as she had once been—many an old hen stole her nest in the brush down by the *zanja* and never came home again, and many a fine young broiler was snatched up by prowling wild cats and coyotes, sneaking down from the mountains beyond.

Joaquina tried now to explain all this to her sister, who listened with horror stricken eyes. "We cannot leave our home," she cried. "We have nowhere else to go—and—always I have lived here—I cannot go away——"

But Joaquina gently unfolded the plan she had not dared to mention before. She recalled friends and relations who lived in *la ciudad*. In the city there would be plenty of sewing to be done, and there would be the church—Concha might go to church every day there. On the other hand, it was impossible for them to stay on here alone. They could not find daily bread here—much less the money to pay their debt. But one thing was possible—the old home must be sold and they must move to the city.

After awhile Concepcion, with her claw-like fingers clasped tight over her breast, stole out of doors. She stood under the beautiful, wide-spreading pepper—as a happy, light-hearted girl—she had stuck the slender shoot into the ground and seen that it was watered daily. She went down into the remains of the orchard and looked up into the hoary-headed olive trees that her father had put in place with his own hands. And then she went and knelt under the Castilian rosebush that her mother had planted—and loved. Drawing her little, black shawl tighter over her face, she moaned softly. It was all true that Joaquina had said. They—two old women—could not live on here alone. They must sell their land—or starve. She—Concepcion—would not mind the loneliness and the starving; but she must think of Joaquina—had she not been the sought for, the beautiful one, in her youth? And she had been out into that strange world—the old home and its associations were not all of life for her.

"But, Holy Mother," she whispered, "*mamá* will will be so lonesome, if we go so far away! She will think we have forgotten her, if we cannot put the flowers on her grave—" and she bent her head deeper among the roses and shed scalding tears.

Always gentle and submissive—there was more of the blood of her mother than of the Spanish grandee in her veins—Concepcion did not oppose her sister's arrangements. The old home was sold for enough to pay off the mortgage and a few hundred beside. After a last visit to the grave, they moved to the city. Here a little house was found on a quiet street, with a tiny yard in front for flowers and a poultry yard behind.

Joaquina was soon happy. She found work enough to supply their simple needs. She loved the stir and bustle of the streets; she liked to see people about. And she had friends — some of them remembered her as the gay young daughter of Señor Ignacio Valdez.

But Concepcion again sobbed herself to sleep, now "because *mamá* was so lonesome away off there alone." Her flowers throve as though touched by magic; no *animales* molested her chickens; but she grew thinner and thinner. The old, uncomplaining sadness had settled over her again, and not even the church could bring her comfort.

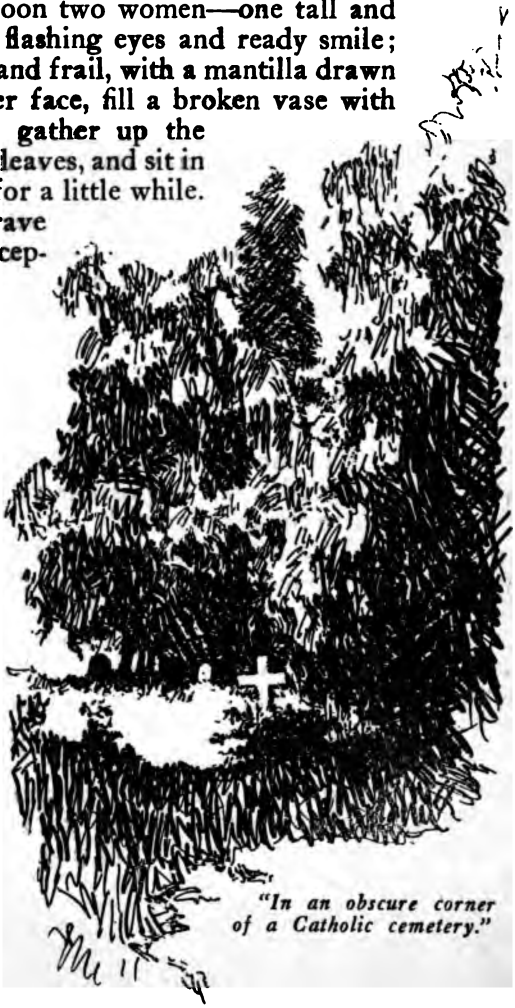
Joaquina went one day to their priest. "Father," she said, "Our mother is buried over there at Agua Mansa. Would it not be possible to bring her here and lay her in the graveyard?"

"It could be done, daughter," the old man said, "but why? She rests as well there as here. And it would cost more than you could afford to pay."

"But, father," and Joaquina wiped away the tears, "my sister cries and cries because she says, '*Mamá* is lonesome and thinks we forget her—for we no longer bring flowers!' I am afraid Concepcion will die, too, and then I shall be left all alone—if she cannot put the flowers on the grave of our mother. Here is money," and she gave him two gold pieces, the last of their little store, "and I will pay more—if only it may be done."

In an obscure corner of a Catholic cemetery of Los Angeles, there is a grave, at the head of which stands a little, white cross. At its foot is an untrimmed rose bush—the rose of Castile. Every Sunday afternoon two women—one tall and straight, with flashing eyes and ready smile; the other tiny and frail, with a mantilla drawn close about her face, fill a broken vase with fresh flowers, gather up the scattered rose leaves, and sit in quiet content for a little while.

It is the grave of Señora Concepcion Valdez.



*"In an obscure corner of a Catholic cemetery."*

This is a "true" story—the sisters still live in Los Angeles. But the grave of the mother remains in the little burying ground at Agua Mansa. Agua Mansa (gentle water) was settled by a colony of New Mexicans in 1852, at a point on the banks of the Santa Ana, about two miles from the town of Colton. A chapel was built, which has now crumbled away. Its bell, made from metal collected in the vicinity and cast at Agua Mansa, now hangs in the Catholic church at Colton. Many of the early Spanish and foreign settlers of Riverside and San Bernardino were buried in the graveyard at Agua Mansa, for many years the only Catholic church and burying ground in this vicinity.

RK PUBLIC LIBR
NCE DEPARTMENT

s under no circumstances to be
taken from the Building